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MATILDE:

OR,

THE CRUSADERS.

1830

MATILDE:

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OR.

THE CRUSADERS,

AN

HISTORICAL DRAMA,

IN

Five Acts.



~~~~~  
**BY CAPTAIN LONGMORE,**

**ROYAL STAFF CORPS.**  
~~~~~

LONDON.

**PRINTED FOR T. CADELL STRAND; AND W. BLACKWOOD,
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P R E F A C E.

THE following Drama, is founded on a Work of the same name written by the celebrated Madame Cottin, from which the Author has drawn his principal characters ; he is, consequently, aware that no merit is ascribable to him in the beauties of its plot, but he has sought, by an adaptation of different language and action, to throw a new, although, perhaps, not a more brilliant colouring over the narrative.

Criticism, has charged many of the late Dramatic writers with defects in their various selections of subject, composition, and scenic situation ; —a judicious choice of which, is material to a good play ;—without it, all the beauty, power,

and pathos of its delineation, fail to render it attractive. The most brilliant subject, and the finest moral, are alike insufficient, if diversified incident, which is the first principle of Dramatic interest, is wanted. And again,—when the whole excitement of Dramatic action is centered in one leading personage,—when one prominent and highly wrought character becomes the main-spring of the action, the attention, from being too strongly excited in particular passages, is palsied ere the five acts can terminate, and the less powerfully delineated parts, become, consequently wearisome to the audience ; such a devotion of purpose, therefore, to one particular character, cannot, possibly, retain its necessary charm throughout.

Declamation, be the subject ever so lofty, or the language ever so classical, wearies by its monotony, where variety of action or situation is deficient ;—some change is requisite, alike to the eye, and to the imagination ; one particular pas-

sion may be so ably treated, as to diffuse interest throughout a Dramatic Poem,—but, unaided, it can never aspire to successful representation.

The unities of time and place, doubtless, often require the strictest adherence to their rules, but, as in the present instance, where the outline of the Piece embraces an extended sphere of action, it is necessarily impossible, and no further apology is requisite for the deviation, when it is remembered, that the immortal Shakespeare himself, did not hesitate to rend asunder the shackles of art, where they would have hampered his mighty genius;—we have an instance of this in his *Romeo and Juliet* ; it is unnecessary to cite others. Perpetual and diversifying interest is required in every literary production, but in none so much as the Drama ; that Shakespeare felt this, must be visible, by the sacrifice which he made to insure it, —a sacrifice, which may, therefore, assuredly be pardoned in other writers.

PROLOGUE TO MATILDE.

(Written by the Author.)

If there's a toil, which energy imparts
To warm the pulse of sympathetic hearts ;—
If there's a task, which to fair Science brings,
Pleasure, and yet improvement on its wings ;—
'Tis in the fairy scenes, which Fiction draws
To win the fervent tribute of applause,
When on the mind, the mimic fancy flows
To wake the smile, with which enjoyment glows :
Or when refinement paints the grief severe,
Which thrills the soul to pity's gathering tear ;
Such, as when taste, and genius, fill the stage,
Crown'd with immortal light by Shakspeare's page !
Warm'd with the charms, which such ideas raise,
With humble heart, to seek your generous praise,
Behold ! ambition leads the bard to night
To court your smiles, his incense of delight !
Give to his toils, the recompense you choose,
Match'd to the modest merits of his muse ;
Small though the claim, his labours can implore,
Accept the will, for deed, he asks no more !
Awed by the thought, what other's toils have been,
In all the proud magnificence of scene,

When on this strand, where England's glories shine,
 Your eyes have witness'd, in this spacious shrine,
 The grace a Kemble, and a Siddons threw
 O'er the ennobled scenes, which Shakspeare drew :
 His, the poor offering of a humbler art,
 Yields not such bright allurements for the heart ;
 Holds not to Fancy such a polish'd glass,
 To catch the varied shadows as they pass :
 Let not the memory of such scenes, then, blight
 In your just judgments, all his toils to-night ;
 But in the circling bound of reason's scope,
 Give emulation one faint ray to hope ;
 And if, in partial gleams, the magic wand
 Of Fancy, should your honest praise expand,—
 Haply receiv'd from Fear's repulsive sighs,
 Where smiles of warm encouragement arise ;
 When o'er the strains, which valour's deeds proclaim,
 Your souls exult at Coeur-de-Lion's name,
 Or hailing virtue with congenial mind,
 View its bright gem, in Matilde's heart enshrin'd :
 Thus, thus beneath the influence of such praise,
 Which cheers, as brightly as Sol's glittering rays,
 Shedding their sunny splendour to impart
 Life to the scene, and lightness to the heart :
 Warmly inspir'd, may art's aspiring aim,
 Urg'd by applause, some loftier subject frame !
 Which Time, in future moments may unroll,
 And prove, how grateful is the poet's soul,
 Convinc'd, at least, that he may safely trust,
 And hail your judgments, which are always just !

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SALADIN, <i>Sultan of the East.</i> MALEK ADHEL, <i>his Brother.</i> METCHOUB, <i>General of the Saracens.</i> KALED, <i>an Officer in the Army.</i>	}	Saracens.
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RICHARD, COEUR DE LION, *King of England.*
 PHILIP AUGUSTUS, *King of France.*
 GUY LUSIGNAN, *King of Jerusalem.*
 CONRAD OF TYRE, *Marquis of Montferrat.*
 WILLIAM, *Archbishop of Tyre.*

JOCELIN DE MONTMORENCI. • HUGUES DE CHARTRES.	}	French Nobles.
---	---	----------------

THE DUKE OF LANCASTER. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER. THE DUKE OF NORFOLK.	}	English Peers.
--	---	----------------

The Legate of the Pope. A Captain of a Vessel.		Standard Bearer of Lusignan A Monk.
--	--	---

Cardinals,—Grandeets,—Nobles,—Guards,—Attendants,
 Christian and Saracen Forces, &c.

BERENGERE, *Queen of England.*
 MATILDE, *Princess of England, Sister of Richard.*
 AGNES, *Daughter of Amaury, a former King of Jerusalem.*

Female Attendants, &c.

Scene lies in the East,—in Egypt and Syria.

MATILDE:

OR,

THE CRUSADERS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE AT DAMASCUS, IN THE SULTAN'S PALACE.

SALADIN, *seated on the throne, surrounded by the
SARACEN GRANDEES, METCHOUB, and KALED,
&c. the apartments presenting great magnificence
and state.* GUARDS, &c.

SALADIN.

Ye followers of the Faithful,—who have sworn
By Alla and the Koran, to uphold
The holy Prophet's laws, and raise your arms
Wielding the glaring scymitar, and crowd
With glowing spirit to defend his shrine :
Behold, once more, the monarchs of the West,
Those zealot Nazarenes, the heated sons
Of the aspiring cross, are leagued to pour

(As the storm-rolling ocean doth its waves)
 Their millions on our land ; and raging, toss
 Their angry arms, and send their murmurs loud
 Even as the wind when issuing from its caves
 Bears the dark thunder on its bellowing blast,
 And in fanatic rage, would devastate
 Our fields, and glut their hunger with the blood
 Of Asia's offspring!—but shall Asia see
 Its sons and daughters perish at their hands?
 Shall they who twice have freed their country, bask
 In weak degrading indolence, and waste
 Their strength and spirit, in soft servile sighs?
 And shall the chain of bondage grow so light
 And easy of endurance, that the race
 Sprung from th' Abassidēs, will bear its yoke
 Nor strive to shake its fetters from their frame?
 No,—the same energy which nerv'd your limbs
 And crush'd the Christian on Tiberiad's plain,
 Still, still shall make the glittering crescent tower
 O'er Europe's dark invaders ! and convince
 Your glory is your country's weal, your hearts
 The holy prophet's, and your ready hands
 For Saladin and victory.

[*A trumpet sounds.*

But,—hark !—

Some herald from their hosts, that blast bespeaks;
 'Tis well ! Kaled, go thou, and quickly learn
 The message which these haughty kings would send.

[*Exit KALED.*

(Advancing from the throne.)

Metchoub, the pride of Saladin starts forth,
When Europe's pale-fac'd offspring dare condemn
The blood of Asia, and her prophet's creed.
Did Salem find no mercy at my hands
When victory decreed her smiles to us,
And our triumphant flag, seen waving o'er
That humbled city's pale inhabitants
Pronounc'd them all our captives?

METCHOUB.

Mighty prince,

'Tis ever with mankind, that interest rears
Its idol but to serve deception's views,
And this is not the first and only time
It hath been tainted with ingratitude.

SALADIN.

Even so, Metchoub, and the captive's prayer
Sueing for mercy, and for life itself,
Would, (whilst he pleads commiseration's boon
With the too-humbled office of the heart)
Strike with the hand, did not fear palsy it.

Enter KALED.

KALED.

Great Prince,—the kings of England and of France
Have sent ambassadors, who wait without;
And their request, is to make known to you,
Their weighty missions, and to know your will.

SALADIN.

If they would know my will, tell them to mark
The preparations round, for bloody war ;
And when they journey back to tell their chiefs
What Saladin replied ;—let them take note,
Upon Tiberiad's field ! The sepulchres
Where their last legions lie, who dar'd oppose
His powerful arm on proud religion's plea,
Will give his sternest answer ;—and his hopes
Look to the same requital for their share.
But stay,—I still would council their demands
And hear their terms,—if arrogant or mild ;
For Saladin will never bow to those
Who dare to dictate where *he* should decide.
Let them be summon'd. [Exit KALED bowing.

(SALADIN *returns to the throne.*)

Followers and friends !

I know there is not one that would exchange
The toils of arduous war, for slothful peace,
If glory's balance fail'd the smallest weight ;
Nor shall their threats of vengeance scare our hearts,
'Till Asia's soil be soak'd with Europe's blood.

*Enter KALED, followed by the DUKE OF LANCASTER
and HUGUES DE CHARTRES, who bow to the throne.*

LANCASTER.

To Saladin, the Sultan of the East
Richard of England sends health and respect.

CHARTRES.

Philip of France, too, mighty Caliph, bears
Thro' me, his servant, words of courtesy.

SALADIN.

Too long hath Syria seen the invading grasp
Of banded nations, shadowing o'er its soil ;—
Nations who would array their *Lord*, in looks
Of meekness,—mercy, fortitude and faith ;
But the religion which his law appoints,
Does it behove its followers to redeem
Their sins by spilling blood ? and deck their shrine
With human hecatombs ? and is the Cross
Worthy more salutation, when 'tis borne
And planted 'midst the victims of the sword ?—
Twice hath the fanaticism of a few
Cost earth its bravest sons ! and twice hath fate
Doom'd them to pay the forfeit by the loss ;
Jerusalem is ours !—behold from thence
The holy Prophet took his parting flight ;
'Twas there the Houris beckon'd, and their glance,
Thro' the blue veil of Paradise, shone forth
To lead him to his destiny and joys ;—
To us, it is as dear, as priz'd, as bless'd !
Ye shout for Jesus !—Mahomet's our cry !
If yours to fight for, ours 'tis to defend.—
But what would England's king demand or do ?

LANCASTER.

Sultan, the pilgrims to the holy tomb,
(Where dwells their thoughts on earth, and hopes above,)

Have sojourn been denied ;—and Europe's voice
 Again hath call'd its offspring to release
 The temple of its Lord from eastern creeds
 And rank idolatry ;—the word of Heaven
 Seems to have breath'd its spirit into men.
 Behold they throng unsought, Briton, and Frank,
 German, Venetian,—to appear in arms,
 And drive the Moslem from the shrine of Christ.

SALADIN.

Words are vile weapons in a boaster's power.
 'Tis easier said than done, when men decide
 E're destiny does for them ;—it were well
 Had Richard, and had Philip offer'd terms
 And ponder'd e're they ventur'd on the die.

LANCASTER.

By that all-pious prelate's prayers inspir'd—
 William of Tyre,—and summon'd at Gisors,—
 Kings, and their colleagues—churchmen—Templars,
 chiefs,
 Assembled at the conference ;—and there,
 In the enthusiast-spirit of his zeal,
 His voice reprov'd the indolence of kings,
 Whose souls were passive in religion's cause ;
 Blaming the nobles, blushing for the church,
 And crying "shame," upon the warriors' heads,
 Who, whilst they saw the holy city fall,
 Lamented, and yet left their swords undrawn !
 It was enough, the general acclaim

Was "To Jerusalem," and, quick as fire
Ignites the touch-wood, thus their heated minds
Painted in dreams, that shrine already won.

SALADIN.

Aye, wanton Hope will make the wary rave
Then who shall wonder when it wins the wild?
If fate was in our bidding, who is there
Who would be as he is?—yet haply so
We know not that to which we are predestin'd;
Else had th' inflated fancies, which have led
The Christians to invade this land once more,
Been wisely caution'd by a wiser power
Than their own rashness, and deluded hearts.
And what says Philip?

CHARTRES.

Prince, both monarchs, ask,
(Ere they let loose their warriors on the land
And hurl the murderous shaft of angry War)
The cancel of the act you have declar'd,—
And, that admission to the holy tomb
(To all who seek that pilgrimage) be given;
Moreover, as a safeguard for the deed,
That Ptolemais be surrendered up
And the sea-coast from Tyre to Jaffa granted,
And held as hostage in the Christian's hands;
These are the terms they offer.

SALADIN.

Is it thus

They send to Saladin?

CHARTRES.

Even so.

SALADIN. *(haughtily.)*

Indeed!

Would they insult, the monarch who hath dealt
With far more clemency than they can boast?
Say, did they instigate the wily act
Which the fierce Conrad, (like the wolf for prey)
Laid wait for and committed, when, upon
Our caravans to Mecca's honour'd shrine,
His fury and his rapine he indulg'd?
Doth the proud eagle let the raven peck
At its young brood? and shall the lion hold
His anger when the jackall dares to mock?
No,—tho' they come with an all-powerful host
Portentous as the tempest's blackest frown,
This form shall be the rock to raise its head
Where Syria's sons shall rally round and stand.
Mankind should learn, that they must not dictate
Whose hearts desire, yet do not hold the prize;
But, still to shew how Saladin disdains
The empty vauntage, which vain words denote,
Bring forth the captive king! *[Exit KALED.]*

Thus will he shew

How little fear can find within his breast
One smallest spot, whereon to spread its lair.

LANCASTER.

Pardon, great prince, what Richard would demand
In Ptolemais being given——

SALADIN.

No more ;

Your pilgrims may to Calvary proceed,
Henceforth no molestation shall be given ;
But as to Ptolemais,—when this limb
No longer can thus grasp this scymitar,
And my voice be, like to the idle wind
Upon the lazy bosom of the clouds,
Whose breath is nearly motionless,—then Richard,
Entrance perchance may find,—but not till then.
[*Enter KALED, followed by GUY LUSIGNAN, guarded.*
Know ye, this chief ?

CHARTRES.

'Tis Lusignan,—

SALADIN.

Then hear ;

I seek not, chieftain, in the present hour
Which sees me powerful, thou, a prisoner,
To vaunt authority with gorgeous words,
For mercy shines most where no vain display
Circles the frame, wherein the gem is set ;
Accept thy freedom !—guards, strike off those chains ;
Return with these two nobles to their camp,
And if the heart of Richard would demand,

Or Philip's question aught of Saladin ;
 I found thee brave,—and bravery seldom blends
 Its blood with calumny's,—therefore to thee
 My tongue intrusts my heart's integrity ;
 Their terms are not the terms which they should ask,
 Or I receive !—I see the phantom, War,
 Already lights his torch ;—I see the glare
 Now casting a pale shadow, which will soon
 Shower down a nearer, crimson vivid flame ;
 'Tis so decreed, and in the conflict's doom,
 If fortune follows on their fiery track,
 Tell them that Saladin then bade them think
 Of Salem's capture, and be merciful.

LUSIGNAN.

The heart will play the hypocrite at times ;
 Candour is each man's motto,—yet how small
 Is the proportion seen, whose actions prove
 An index to their words ;—I thank you, prince,
 For freedom's boon, which you have proffered me ;
 Yet in the ~~coming~~ contest should we chance
 To meet, and Lusignan's aspiring arm
 Be pitted against Saladin's,—the thought,
 The throb of triumph, may supplant the glow
 Of gratitude, and he who now accepts
 Of freedom from his foe, amidst the strife
 And struggle of fierce war and victory,
 May be the foremost to return the deed
 By martyrdom, not mercy.

SALADIN.

Even thus,

By Mahomet, I honour in a foe
 The valour which makes war worth competition ;
 The greater triumph hath the greater fame ;
 He who hath laid the tiger at his feet
 Will never boast of mastering a cur ;
 Nor vaunt of toils less arduous, whose steps
 Have trodden and surmounted Caucasus.

LUSIGNAN.

Yes, Sultan, and altho' Tiberiad's fight
 Saw Lusignan's proud crest, and banner droop ;
 He has at least the thought, that it was not
 Feebly contended, and ignobly lost :
 But sword to sword, and thrust to thrust became
 The sun's broad splendour, which shone full on it.
 Now, lords, I wait your leisure.

LANCASTER.

Have our terms

Receiv'd then, prince, the seal of your disdain ?

SALADIN.

Aye, tell your masters, Saladin ne'er turns
 An ear of cold contempt upon whate'er
 Will tend to ease the weight of human woe ;
 But there is justice due to all,—and he
 Who holds a nation's balance in his hands,
 Should never dare to serve himself alone,
 But suit his wishes to his people's choice.

CHARTRES.

This is your answer ?

SALADIN.

And the proudest one
For potentate or patriot ;—'tis determined.

LUSIGNAN.

Let us be brief then ;—lords, you both have heard
What princely Saladin hath now express'd ;
And tho' stern Mars hath fated it to be
Dependent on the circumstance of war,
And that his yelping blood-hounds he will loose
To satiate his eager appetite :
Let not acknowledgments in us fall short
Whilst peace permits to proffer our just sense ;
For tho' our destinies must shortly lead
Our steps to battle, and our eyes be fix'd
With all the keen ferocity of war,
At whoe'er should oppose us in the fight !
Let them now lighten up in mildest looks,
And courteously take leave of Saladin.

LANCASTER.

If thus decreed, that war's to be the cry,
The word of Lancaster can have small weight
In urging amity.—Since it is so,
And England's host must lower their visors down,
Draw on the gauntlet and undraw the sword ;
Sultan, may such kind fates as you wish us
Be the farewell of humble Lancaster.

SALADIN.

True honour in a public cause, thinks not
 Of private wrangling or of petty wrong,
 And patriotism scorns an office, which
 Must taint the soul with some perfidious part.
 The individual in the world's vast scale,
 Is like the drop to ocean, grain to sand,
 For glory looks to all, and would not stain
 Its gorgeous crest, with one poor sacrifice,
 But as its offering tends a prouder pledge,
 And sums its triumphs with immortal views.
 Chieftain, may words as palliative as mine
 Be your next greetings from your sovereign's lips.
 Kaled, conduct these warriors to the gate.

[*Exeunt* LUSIGNAN, LANCASTER, CHARTRES, KALED
and GUARDS.

(SALADIN *advances from the throne.*)

METCHOUB.

I would not set my counsel's erring breath,
 Most mighty Prince, 'gainst what you have decreed,
 Yet in the freedom of Guy Lusignan,
 You give the Christian power a champion, bold,
 Skilful and wary! soft in word yet subtle,
 Who has the patience of the dog, which knows
 Whom it should fawn to, yet when it should snarl.

SALADIN.

'Tis true, but from a smarting remedy
 Have you ne'er seen vast benefit arise?

The leech doth bleed his patient, yet the pain
Caus'd by the puncture, is a trifling smart,
He undergoes for health's restorative.

Richard, 'tis known, supports the marriage claim
Of Lusignan, now call'd Jerusalem's king,
Thro' Sybilla his wife, whilst Philip's hand
To Conrad of Montferrat is outstretch'd;—
Both vain, both valorous, envious of command,
And proud of the supremacy of power:
Soon will this rival cause supplant the thoughts
Of that, which mutual interest should advance;
And like the wind and tide from adverse points,
Which meeting, lash the waters to a foam,
And toss the bark, then balanc'd, on the deep;
So must their cause be buffeted between
Their adverse wills, and founder too, perchance,
Should fortune raise their tempers to a storm.

METCHOUB.

If Tyre's learn'd prelate leave them to their fate,
It may be so,—but his persuasive words
Seem, ever, balsam to their heated minds.

SALADIN.

When passion gets the better of a man,
And buries reason, in the foaming swell
His anger pours on circumspection's views—
When self-will pinions prudence to its goal,
Allowing pride to riot on each side,
And force its way thro' every barrier round,

Which calmer judgment had erected there;—
 When obstinacy, rivetted to power,
 Disdains all consequences, in the heat
 Of purport and desire—what boots the word
 Of interference from intruding lips?
 Or cautious conduct to a madman's brain?
 Metchoub, I know the temper of these kings!
 And when the deed hath happen'd, recollect
 It was thy Sultan prophecied the thing.

Enter KALED.

KALED.

My liege, a messenger hath now arriv'd
 From Damietta, whom Prince Malek sends,
 The bearer of these letters to your hands.

SALADIN.

The noble Malek hath been on the seas,
 And these may tell the capture of some prize;
 Would it were one, whose ransoming were worth
 These monarchs' diadems; (*Breaks the seal and reads.*)

Ha! my noble brother,
 In whose pure veins, true valour runs as clear
 As doth the spring first issuing from earth!
 Metchoub, behold, fortune hath led his bark
 To interrupt one with a costly freight!
 Bearing Berengere, Richard's youthful Queen,
 Whom he espous'd at Cyprus!—and Matilde,
 Princess of England!—William, too, of Tyre!
 The valiant Montmorency!—Norfolk's Duke,

With many chiefs, and nobles of their lands !
They must be all redeem'd at weighty price:
The scale must bend for ransom'd royalty.
Kaled—bid thou, the messenger, prepare
For Damietta by to-morrow's sun ;
That done, attend my call within the hour.

[*Exit* KALÉD

Brave Metchoub, I design thy valiant arm
For the defence of Ptolemais, should siege
Be laid by these crusaders ;—many a fight
Hath prov'd thy courage, and much more, thy skill ;
But my commands in private I will give.
At present, we will break the council up,
To meditate on our expanding hopes ;
And may dissensions fill the Christian camp,
Since Tyre's Archbishop gives no counsel there.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.

*Scene lies at Damietta in the Sultan's Palace.—Enter
BERENGERE, MATILDE, the ARCHBISHOP of TYRE,
the DUKE of NORFOLK, &c.*

BERENGERE.

Ah, me ! my Lord, my Richard !—ye harsh fates
Did Hymen crown our nuptials with such joy,
But to deceive by fortune's fickle smile,
And make our grief more heavy by the act.

WILLIAM OF TYRE.

Madam, be comforted : King Richard soon
Will hear of our captivity, and send
Offers of ransom.

BERENGERE.

Worthy prelate, that
Will but oppress the more if 'tis refus'd.
Richard now deems us hastening to his arms,
And Hope, on tip-toe, hovers round his steps,
And leads on Fancy, whispering we are near.
Sister—

MATILDE.

Dear Berengere.

BERENGERE.

Ah, cruel day !

That led the Saracen to cross our path ;
Our vessel seem'd to dance upon the seas
As jocund with delight, as if it knew
The happiness it bore its inmates to !
Until—

MATILDE.

'Twere pitiable, indeed,—but pray
Weep not, for Heaven will still protect us here.

BERENGERE.

Good Norfolk, help me to a seat, my limbs
Seem doubly weary, pondering o'er my woes.
How is brave Montmorency ?

[NORFOLK *leads her to a seat.*

NORFOLK.

Gracious Queen,
Sleep hath refresh'd him, and his wounds pronounc'd
Less dangerous than they seem'd.

BERENGERE.

Thank Heaven ! It would
Be sad, for one so young and brave to die.

WILLIAM OF TYRE.

That mighty power, my Queen, who rules o'er all,
Decides our destinies by his just will ;
And if he checks us in our eager hopes,
'Tis but to prove our faith towards him, and learn
If we are as our outward words bespeak.

'Tis only by affliction we are prov'd ;
And resignation is our peace with Heaven.
For this fair maid, Religion's loveliest flower,
My sorrows most extend ; but just brought forth
From the pure cloister's solemn sanctuary,
'Midst Infidels, who spurn the name of Christ,
To whom she is espous'd ;—too much I fear
The fiery fervour of an eastern heart,
Left to indulge his fancy to excess ;—
And tho' the noble Malek hath a soul
Superior to his race, as the sun's ray
Compar'd to twilight, yet my eye hath watch'd
The ardent looks his features have convey'd,
And the too fix'd continuance of his glance ;
God grant, her heart may still remain unmov'd.

MATILDE.

Oh ! Father, doth a Saracen then dare
To spurn the Saviour of mankind ?—you said
The Prince was candid, generous, and brave !
Did your pure piety, then, ne'er attempt
To make his soul expand to heavenly light ?

WILLIAM OF TYRE.

My child, the errors in which we are bred
Are seldom rooted by the hand of time ;
The faith of Islam is the worship, which
Malek, and his forefathers, have been taught ;
If he forsakes it, he forsakes his race,
Brother, and country, all which have a tie,



Stronger, than exhortation from these lips
Could break, altho' they soften'd down his soul.

BERENGERE.

If Malek has the generous heart you say,
Father, will he not give compliance to
My wishes, and restore me to my lord?

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Prince Malek sends me to inform the Queen
His wishes are to pay respects to her,
And to the Princess, should it suit their will.

BERENGERE.

Say, my good messenger, that England's Queen,
Is honour'd much, and ready to receive him.

[Exit ATTENDANT.]

WILLIAM OF TYRE.

Madam, behold an opportunity,
To ask the obligation you desire,
Yet, yet I fear, that Malek will not dare
To grant your suit, 'gainst Saladin's consent.

BERENGERE.

Oh, say not so, good Prelate, it will break
The tender string which binds hope to my heart.

WILLIAM OF TYRE (*to MATILDE.*)

My daughter, it were better you retir'd,
Since your lips cannot plead for the request.

BERENGERE.

I fear her absence may offend the Prince,
Since his enquiries ever are so great,

And add another cause for his denial.
What says my dear Matilde?

MATILDE.

Oh! if you think
My presence will prove useful, I will stay,
Tho' he should be as basilisks to my eyes,
And blind me by his gaze.

Enter ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Prince Malek comes.

WILLIAM OF TYRE (*to* MATILDE.)

My child, behold, he comes, let fall thy veil.

Enter MALEK ADHEL.

MALEK.

Joy hath no harbinger like that which gilds
Anticipation with soft beauty's smile.
Lady, within our clime, custom hath mark'd
But little of those polish'd habits, known
To European hearts; and bred in camps
Amidst the toil and circumstance of war,
The soldier ever shews the ruder grace
Which ill bespeaks the feeling he may hold;
Then if my words want the more polish'd sense,
Expression will find mercy in your smiles,
And by my actions plead its best excuse.

BERENGERE.

Report, my Lord, replete with brightest words,
Holds Truth's fair mirror up, which so reflects

When, at Damascus, I beheld you first.
In this fair daughter of the church, you see
The purity of Heaven, the light of faith,
Who, in humility will love to pray
Even for the enemies of her Redeemer.

MALEK.

Who shall say "Nay," when such perfection pleads.

WILLIAM OF TYRE.

My child, the Prince permits you to retire,
At least his word does not deny the boon.

[MATILDE *courtesies and retires.*]

MALEK (*looking after her ardently.*)

Behold her steps, how like the soft gazelle's,
Which scarcely stirs the wild-flower where it treads !
And her dark eye, too, with its sapphire ray !
Her movements, graceful as the swan's, upon
The bosom of the lake ; or beauteous rose
Wav'd by the sighing Zephyr's gentle breath !
Oh, that I were the nightingale to sit
And pour my love-song, nestling on its breast,
Feasting the senses on the sweet perfume !
Surely it is the houri of some heaven !
For mortal form and feature never shone
In half that symmetry of charm divine !

[MALEK *still gazing on the spot.*]

BERENGERE.

Pardon, my lord,—

MALEK (*still gazing.*)

Ah, now, the envious fates
Lead her away ;—surely it is a dream !

BERENGERE.

Pardon, my lord—but, oh, say have you heard
What stirs 'mongst the crusaders ? Can you soothe
This heart, by deep anxiety now torn,
And tell it aught of England's king, my husband ?

MALEK.

Madam,—report speaks of dissensions great
Which set all other energies aside ;
But some few casual conflicts have given scope
For Richard's soul to shew its skill and courage.

BERENGERE

And will not noble Malek's soul expand
In mercy and give freedom to our steps
That I may see my Richard's form again ?

MALEK.

Were mine the power, Lady, you should be free !
But the great Saladin, must sign consent ;
I have dispatch'd a messenger, who soon
Will bring his just decision ;—which no doubt
Will be, what England's captive queen implores.
But whilst captivity still binds its chain
Your will's a law, in all you may require
Save that which strong affection most demands.

[*Exit MALEK, bowing.*

BERENGERE.

Ah, Coeur de Lion, that aspiring soul

Seeking out glory in each dangerous path,
Will prove one day a traitor to thy life,
And lay thee in the grave, 'ere Berengere
Can gain her freedom, and fly to thy arms.

NORFOLK.

Not so, most gracious mistress,—cheer your heart;
Fortune smiles oft when we expect her least.

BERENGERE.

Good Norfolk,—so frowns Fate, when in the 'midst
Of all that happiness could deem secure;—
Oh, with the love Matilde inspires in him,
Would she beseech the noble Malek's soul!
Soon would he yield compliance to her prayer,
And grant the liberty we so desire.

WILLIAM OF TYRE.

Lady, when passion fills an eastern heart,—
That fiery love which never had a check
In all the blood's impetuous beating will,—
Who shall say where its vivid flame may tend?
Oh, rather bear the thralldom of a chain,
Than that the child of virtue should be plac'd
In peril from lasciviousness and sin.
Did you not mark the spark, already fir'd?
And watch the glowing transport in his eye?
Think of that Agnes, whose untoward fate
My tongue related of but yesterday;—
The child of kings,—the morning star of light,—
The flower of beauty,—pride of chivalry!

She, for whose smile a thousand hearts aspir'd,
And in whose praise, a thousand lips exclaim'd !
Behold, her now apostate to her faith,
And the loose harem's inmate,—unespous'd ;
For whom ?—oh, ask, Maïek's attractive charms.
Let soft desire, once play around the heart
And fancy give attention to her smiles,
She puts on such a flattering look, that we
Are won 'ere we imagine that we are,—
'Till in temptation's pit, unseen, (from all
The flowers and foliage wreathing o'er its brink,)—
We fall ! alas, too oft to rise no more.

BERENGERE.

Oh, be it, father, as your precepts point ;
Alas, affliction's is a weary load
But we must bear since heaven directs we should.
I pray you, help me,—Norfolk too, your arm.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE III.

Scene at Damietta in the garden of the Palace.

MALEK enters, (*solus.*)

Quench, quench, thy torch, thou minister of love,
For Malek's bosom is a flood of fire ;
'Tis thou whose torch hath set it all in flames,
And made one vast volcano of this heart.
Or do I dream ? aye,—if this life's a dream !
Breathe ?—ha,—my lips inhale the passing breeze,
But all seems sultry to this feverish brow.
I seem as if the wizard hand of Fate
My spirit had entranc'd, to act the slave ;
And deaden'd every thought, save that which leaves
The soul, to madden with the infusing spell.
Houri of loveliness !—'tis thou,—'tis thou,—
But rob'd in such unearthly charms,—that I
Adore—as if infatuation's chain
Had link'd me to one spot to look, and love.
I have the power to seize the blushing rose
And press it to these lips, and call it mine !
But shall they say in turn,—a Saracen's
Hath far less honour than a Christian's soul ?
Oh, no ; but whilst that prelate's powerful word

Denounces our religious rites, and creed,
There is no hope.—Shall I dismiss him hence
And let him go to turn the jarring minds
Of those high-leaders to the tide of war?
And Montmorency?—I have watch'd him too,
How his looks seem'd to kindle at her smile!
He stands between us, as an envious cloud
To catch the radiance of the brilliant sun
Whilst I am thrown in shade;—he too must go:—
I'll ponder on the thought, for I am now
As one, who cast upon a stranger land
Wanders to find a tenement, where Hope
May rest its wing, and renovate the mind
To gain the spot, where all its fondness clings.

[*Enter AGNES behind.*

Matilde, Matilde,—oh, that each waving leaf
Which rustles round, had a melodious voice
To whisper Malek's love-song to thy soul
And win thee with its sweetness!

AGNES (*coming forward.*)

Who is he,
Who dares infect the pure air with his words,
Breathing pollution to the grove around,
And importunes inanimation's self,
Thus to repeat his wanton, whining sighs?

MALEK.

Alas, fond, foolish woman is it you?

AGNES.

Too fond,—but foolish!—ask your faithless heart,
And if your conscience will deny it not,
Vengeance, from me, shall make your soul retract.

MALEK.

No, Agnes,—it was you who sought, and sued ;
And when the captur'd Salem saw me pass
Proclaiming pardon from great Saladin,
Your eyes beheld me,—yet you knew our laws ;
Love led your heart to loose all other bonds,
And if the shaft still quivers in your breast,
Time with its softening hand must soothe the smart
And resignation be your remedy.

AGNES.

(Drawing a dagger.)

I'll have no remedy but one,—or this
Shall tell forgetfulness its forfeiture,
And if I err not, it shall gall you more
Than if you felt its point.

MALEK.

Talk to the winds,—

I would not tell you so, but that you force
Your presence, where it little helps your purpose.

AGNES.

Despair makes demons,—wrong creates revenge,
Which former bonds, (now broken) rouse the more,
Till jealousy soon maddens into crime
And can but cool its fiery mood, in blood.

MALEK.

What blood ?

AGNES.

Not thine,—but some, as dear to thee.

MALEK.

Woman,—beware,—back, to the harem, back ;
I did not let thee free, to play the fool ;
If so,—a lock must limit thy loose steps.

[MALEK is about to retire, when AGNES steps
between.

AGNES.

Draw,—draw, I say,—thou shalt not leave me so.
This arm, which hath been foremost in war's ranks,
And taught thy tribes, submission, before now,
May make thy heart as humble ;—dost thou hear ?

MALEK.

I war not with a woman, nor can love
Woman, whose feelings can delight in war !
Away, away.— [Exit MALEK.

AGNES.

Then hear my curse, ye heavens !
From this hour I turn all my love to hate ;
May all his hope be blasted in the bud,
Which, as a canker-worm, may gnaw his breast ;
Creating lasting torments to his soul.
May passion urge, whilst impotence restrains,
And after all desert him ; may he fall

Howling for help,—with none to ease his pain,
Whilst I stand anjering at his agony;
And with my shouts of vengeance drown his cries,
Till in remorse, he clasps his hands, and dies.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Scene, in the Palace at Damietta.

MATILDE (*alone, and kneeling at a table with a
Crucifix, she advances.*)

Alas, he's gone,—he on whose pious brow
I look'd,—as pilgrims at the sacred shrine
For comfort and relief:—Father of Tyre,
Oh, may thy counsel so fence round my soul,
That it may turn the arrows of all sin.
Where are ye now, ye happy days,—when first
My mind expanded from the infant bud,
Fresh, fair, and fragrant to each hope that smiled?
Ye, blest abodes of Faith,—ye cloisters pure,
Where Matilde's ear but heard the voice of peace,
Which piety then chaunted into praise?
Ye, sisters of my love, with souls as fair
As those of seraphs, round the throne of God,
Singing forth glory's anthem to the High?—
Alas!—Farewell;—farewell for me, the morn
Which usher'd in tranquillity to bless;—
Farewell the shrine where virtue only trod,
Unsoil'd, unsettled by the din of vice.

And, oh ! companions of those purest scenes
I have but this,—to call my troubled mind
From all which jars it, and bewail your loss ;
Oh, that I had the pinions of the dove
To fly, and settle in your ark again !

Enter BERENGERE.

BERENGERE.

Sister, thy heart seems heavy as mine own !
Oh, stern adversity ! who feels thy sting
Feels one, more poignant than the adder's tongue ;
For thou hast but one medicine,—and that,
Too oft, but slow, and certainless of cure.

MATILDE.

When the wind tears the woodbine from the tree
It needs must fall and wither ;—even so
My soul repines at that good prelate's loss
Whom we are separated from, to mourn.

BERENGERE.

Virtuous Matilde, I know that Malek's heart
Looks to you as its idol ; whom it would
Pay homage to, and worship, yet adores
With too much awe of your soul's purity
To lift one impious glance at ;—for his soul
Like his clime's sunny splendour, beams one ray
Of clear continual light, yet temper'd so
By Reason's genial breeze, which o'er his mind
Thus moderates the Summer-shining glow.
Would you then wake the chord within his breast

On which soft generosity is ton'd ?---
 Would you appeal ? (and Pity's pleading form
 Could never be personified so fair :)
 I know that he would acquiesce in all,—
 And grant us freedom at your sweet request !
 Why do you tremble thus ?

MATILDE.

Alas,—alas,—

I know not ; I would fain,—do as you wish,
 And yet I would not ;—for my thoughts of late
 Wander as birds, that loosen'd from the cage
 Where they were nurs'd, and tended by sweet hands
 Find all things strange around them, and return
 To seek repose within that nest again,
 Yet see the door now shut upon their hopes.

BERENGERE.

Yes, hope is vain where Fortune will not link
 Her hand in sweet communionship,—and smile.
 Oh! Richard, oh my lord, my loving lord,
 Pale is that cheek of her's, which the soft rose
 (But two short months) with brightest hues adorn'd ;
 And sinking is the spirit, which was once
 Blithe as the lark's sweet carol to the morn
 Through the blue vault of heaven,—alas, my child
 All vanish'd now: it seems as if a cloud
 Was hung before me, symbol of the pall,
 Forewarning me I had not long to live ;
 But should you ever see—

MATILDE.

Oh, talk not thus:—

What will not fond affection's powers perform
To soothe a sorrow'd sister's sinking soul?
Oh, I will seek the Prince,—will plead with prayers,
With tears, entreaties, all, to see you smile;
And health and hope, beam from your eye again.

BERENGERE.

Like Richard was that spoken:—'twas the blood
Of the Plantagenets, which prompted it.

MATILDE.

Oh rather say, it was not pride that urg'd
The heart's fulfilment of it, but affection;
For you, for Richard, yours shall be the voice
To guide my actions, and to prompt my words.

BERENGERE.

My child, the Prince already is inform'd
That I would see him, on an urgent boon;
The hour of audience now approaches fast;
And in the hall of Mercy is it nam'd.
Go, Matilde, maid of purity, go forth,
Even as the dove of promise to my hopes;
And, oh, should Malek dare, (yet well I know
His soul would sicken to insult thy ear,)
I need not tell you,—Richard's sister feels
Her ancestor's,—her own proud birth, too well
To let affront be offer'd to her name.

God speed thee, sister—one embrace, for fast
The hour comes on.

MATILDE.

And, oh, that it were past.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Scene, the same, in the Hall of Mercy.

Enter MATILDE (solus.)

He comes not yet; it gives my throbbing brow
A moment to collect its scatter'd thoughts.
How calm, how peaceful, was this bosom once,
Even as a smiling lake, serenely fix'd
In some fair vale, secluded from the breath
Of boisterous winds; and as the tender flowers
Wreathing the verdant margin, were my thoughts,
Whose incense was as pure as their perfume.
Thou, glorious sun! in whose vast splendour, we
Behold the eye of heaven, which looks upon
The world, and all its errors; let me turn,
And fill my mind in an unsated gaze
Of wonder, and delight, and weaning all
The earthly erring feelings from this breast,
Transfus'd in speechless adoration, kneel!

[*She kneels, looking upwards, then starts.*]

Away, alluring vision, nor displace
The thoughts of heaven by thy o'erpowering spell,
Forcing thy image 'twixt my God and me!
Oh, love! what art thou, all-absorbing sense!
That rulest absolute o'er our weak souls,
And haunting our best purports, pure desires,
Striv'st to infatuate us with thy wiles;—
And leading fancy by thy chain, through all
The labyrinth of feelings, to insnare,
(As some poor bark, in the swift-eddy whirl
Of the resistless stream, is hurried on,
And meets a dark Charybdis to its hopes,)
Makest us spell-bound victims at thy shrine?
Oh, that a few, few short months should have seen
A Saracen so cherish'd, where the love
Of heaven alone of late diffus'd its light,
And my young heart contain'd no other thoughts
But purity, and peace, and pious praise!
But hark! I hear a footstep—it is he!
All-seeing Heaven, be thou my help and hope!
[She lowers her veil.]

Enter MALEK ADHEL.

MALEK.

Fair Queen, obedient to your call, I come
To learn the wish so urgent to your hopes. *[Pausing.]*
Is it that feeling mars the force of words?

That, like a statue of distress, you stand
To let your silence for your sorrows plead ?

MATILDE.

Too generous prince !—

MALEK.

'Tis Matilde's voice I hear,
And she— [*He darts forward, and seizes her hand.*]

MATILDE.

(*Throwing back her veil, and interrupting him.*)

Claims safety in prince Malek's presence ;
The purest honour man can boast of, is
To cherish virtue in a woman's cause !

MALEK.

Oh ! who that views the roseate smiling morn
Steal o'er the heavens, in all its loveliness,
But turns with raptur'd feelings to inhale
Its air, which wins the captivated sense ?
Then, like its fairest daughter, to inspire
More transport than the parent of such charms,
Let me pay homage, as the pious do,
Even at the shrine of their idolatry !
[*He advances again to take her hand.*]

MATILDE.

My lord, forbear,—your qualities have been
A wonder to the good ! your valour first,
Then your forbearance, tempering valour's edge,

Your magnanimity ! 'bove all, your mercy !
All men cannot be great, and yet, my lord,
All may be good—if they but strive to be ;
The poorest peasant, in coarse russet clad,
If he is virtuous, is greater far
Than princes ruling millions, who have made
Their tyranny the charter of their laws,
And thus obtain obedience by oppression.

MALEK.

Say, art thou mortal, who can'st win the soul,
Thus breathing magic in thy eloquence ?
And so alluring importunity
As to make it thy slave, and not pursuer ?

MATILDE.

Not so, but a weak daughter of the world,—
Too mortal to be meritorious ;—
Having but thanks to offer as a bribe
From gratitude to goodness for its service !
I stand before you, a defenceless woman,
Anxious to plead for a sick queen and sister !
In you the power is vested for her hopes.
'Twere noble in the strong to aid the weak,
And charity to succour the distress'd.
But, above all, my lord, altho' the laws
Of Islam differ from the creed of Christ,
Mercy's the attribute of all mankind !
Consider this, even unto a failing,
For, if not here, hereafter, angels will
Alike plead for you at the throne of God.

MALEK.

Oh, Matilde ! for infatuation dares
Call you by that fond name, what is it, say,
You would demand, that Malek would not grant ?
Tho' Saladin forbids me to accord,
Yet Matilde's prayer is stronger than his word.
My country calls me to appear in arms,
Yet love delays, enslav'd by Matilde's charms.
Tell then the queen, your sister, she is free ;
Convoy shall be prepar'd, 'ere two more suns,
To guide her to King Richard and her friends.

MATILDE.

How beautiful the majesty of mercy
Sits on the human brow, encircling it
With far more radiance than doth a crown,
Worn in the pure integrity of justice !
Oh ! may this act call heaven's high grace on you !
And, when afar, our orisons shall rise,
Praying that all things great and good be your's.—

MALEK.

Said you afar ! that is queen Berengere ;
But with your voice my sense will still be bless'd !

MATILDE (*starting with emotion.*)

My lord, I thought — Did you not say, my lord,
We were to have our freedom ?

MALEK.

For the queen ;
You nam'd the queen !—Oh, Matilde ! could you deem

My heart's assent so readily had been
Bestow'd to part with you? You must become
My bride, affianc'd by the strongest ties,
Love, ardent love, which knows no passiveness,
But, like yon orb, glows with unceasing light!

MATILDE.

Oh no, it must not be: There may be power
In force to do the deed, but not in words.
Faith is inexorable. Why detain
A helpless maid when all the rest are free?
Oh that your hand should think to separate
The blossom from the stem of its support!

MALEK.

But to be grafted on another stem,
Beneath whose shelter it shall bloom more fair!
Could you, Matilde, behold this bleeding heart,
Toss'd like a bark upon the frantic sea,
All for thy love? Oh, would your unkind words,
Proving more scathful than the lightning's blast,
Strike ruin in persisting to depart?

MATILDE.

True love attests its strongest, purest ties,
When for that love it makes most sacrifice!
Yet of what purports are our hearts, oh God!
The abject culprits, weak deluded slaves,
Who smile at virtue in the open day,
When the world's eye is fix'd upon our looks,
Playing the hypocrite, to seem most fair,

Yet harbouring vice in secret in our hearts;
Whilst passion sets its idols, to allure,
And only mock us when within its power.
Most noble prince, 'ere passion hath too far
Master'd the soul's excesses, speak the word;
Speak! and not only mine, but every voice
Amongst the Christians will extol your name.

MALEK (*falling on his knees.*)

Oh, Matilde! in the phrenzy of my love,
By anguish torn, I will not utter "nay,"
Yet if each fond entreaty is but vain,
I have one boon to ask 'ere yet we part

MATILDE.

Name it—for all that woman can perform
In honour and in gratitude I will.

MALEK.

But wilt thou swear?

MATILDE.

They never swear, my lord,
Whose hearts, bred up in virtue, feel their word
Security enough to do a deed
Which honour dictates. Oaths were fram'd to be
A solemn compact betwixt God and man;
Not us'd in worldly whim or levity,
But only to be made when heaven calls forth
Sacred affiance by its holy laws!

MALEK (*drawing a dagger.*)

You will not swear it? Take this dagger, then,

And pierce my breast, already pierc'd throughout
By love's tormenting shafts! it will not pain
An hundredth fold so much as your denial.

MATILDE.

Oh, prince! your cause—your creed—your country—all!
Stand as huge barriers betwixt you and me!
Fie, fie, put up the dagger; recollect
What ties, what tenets, must oppose the deed!

MALEK.

None, none to me; but, if thou'rt obdurate,
Take this, and strike,—deep as my love lies here!—
My heart, with fulness, seems as it would burst—
Thy pitying hand, setting the current free,
'Twill offer its last warm drops at thy feet!

MATILDE (*laying hold of his arm.*)

It must not be, my lord. Is this, is this
The manliness, the magnanimity,
Which makes your name a bright encircled gem?
Is this prince Malek! far renown'd for all
Noble and honourable? Does there then
Exist a hesitation in the choice:—
The honour'd brother of great Saladin?
Or to be Richard's, in renouncing all
Cause, country, creed, and be the mockery
Of all men, true in friendship and in faith?
Think you, then, it were easier to die
Than to be virtuous? Let me return,
Oh, let me seek the altars of my God!

There shall the prayer of gratitude, implore
Thy happiness unto my dying breath.

MALEK (*rising.*)

There is no happiness without thy love;
And oh, thy love!—

MATILDE.

My love is heav'n's, not earth's;
Esteem, nay more—my heart's regard is your's!
Let that suffice; but for my love, nought else
But heaven shall have it—with a solemn pledge.

MALEK.

Houri! of every charm and grace divine,
Ruling and influencing soul and sense,
Command in all things—for your will is mine;
The guards to guide you, and the hour to go,
And, *gone*, forget that Malek ever was.

MATILDE.

Oh, think me not ungrateful, for it is
A crime which few would be suspected of,
Much more commit. I hop'd not to have had
Such an upbraiding from thy generous lips.
Farewell, my lord, may time the balsam prove,—
Softening thy sorrows, soothing down thy love!
Mine is the gratitude to outlive all. [*Exit bowing.*]

[MALEK gazes awhile on the spot where she
retired, and then falls on his face, letting
the dagger drop by his side.]

Enter METCHOUB.

METCHOUB.

This was the hall to which—

[seeing MALEK, he falls on his knees to salute him.]

MALEK *(starting up at his voice.)*

Who dares intrude ?

Ha ! Metchoub, what—who—where—whence come you now ?

Who dar'd to usher, and direct you hither ?

METCHOUB *(gives a scroll.)*

The mighty Saladin, who sends you this ;

And me, to know if Malek is himself ?

MALEK *(laying his hand on his scymitar.)*

Slave, did he send you hither to insult ?—

For this will teach that I am Malek still.

METCHOUB.

Prince, I am of the faithful. Strike, it is

A sentence truth oft meets with in the world.

MALEK.

On thee, slave, 'twould be justice ; but for once

Mercy shall pardon what it must despise.

Arise—my brother's mandates shall be read.

[He opens the scroll and reads.]

What ! Ptolemais fallen ? and—

[He starts, and raises his hand to his head.]

METCHOUB.

Yes, prince,

This is the truth, which made your servant speak

The words which have your conscience deeply stung!
 Behold, dissensions fill'd the Christian camp,
 And civil strife usurp'd the place of war!
 A few short days, or hours, perchance had seen
 This mighty host disseminated far!
 When Tyre's archbishop, Montmorency's lord,
 Freed by your hands, reach'd the momentous scene.
 Swift as the heralds could proclaim the word,
 And call the chieftains to a conference,
 So flew the news portentous through their lines!
 And the same voice, which first exhorted all
 To march to Palestine, again was rais'd,
 To quell their discord, and reprove their deeds.
 How soon it wrought, the fall of Ptolemais
 Too deeply verifies,—for on the morn
 Which follow'd on their coming, the assault
 Was made. How far this heart maintain'd its fire—
 This arm its vengeance—let their thousands slain
 Bear witness to! The best do not succeed
 Always, nor bravest conquer, but it fell,
 And your's the cause which hasten'd most its doom.

MALEK.

Metchoub, your candour shall not harm you now,
 Since it was zeal which led you to be bold.
 If mine the fault that Ptolemais fell,
 Mine be the fortune shortly to regain it;
 I have wherewith to prove my vaunting words.

METCHOUB.

You may regain, prince, but can you recall
The thousand warrior-hearts who fell for it,
And bleach beneath its battlements ?

MALEK.

Enough ;

I say enough ;—the sting of our misdeeds
Tortures enough, nor needs presumption's aid
To gall thro' malice, not guide through good will.

METCHOUB.

But does not the great Saladin exclaim
In words of deep displeasure ? Oh, my prince,
Each faithful follower of our Prophet, grieves
Thy soul's infatuation to that love,
And to a Nazarene ; on every lip
The sentence hangs between a frown and tear,
To think the just, the generous, the brave,
And noble Malek, should be so ensnar'd.

MALEK.

Metchoub, flame follows on the kindled spark,
And lightning on the storm, so will the soul
At times be wrought on, and inflam'd, until
It maddens, and is lost.

METCHOUB.

Alas ! my lord,

Discard the lover, and arouse the man :
Do as thy mighty brother bids,—despatch
The princess to her white-fac'd warriors ; and,

It shall fare hard with Richard, but his spouse
Shall be the ransom made for Ptolemais,
And thus spare thousands. Recollect, oh, prince !
Delay's a hypocrite, who robs us oft
Of better fortune. Lo, already do
The people know of our proud sultan's will ;
And, as I enter'd, all the multitude
Assembled at the portal, thus exclaim'd—
“Give up the princess.”

MALEK.

Let them strain their throats
Till their vile tongues croak as the fulsome toad's,
And saturate with curses.

METCHOUB.

Say not so,
But speak the word, and let your servant haste
And tell the queen her destiny.—To you
Each true believer looks with brightest hopes !
Already is one city lost, and should
Dissensions creep into our hearts, farewell
To former honours and to hard-earn'd fame !
And he whose memory looks back,—will curse
The fates that sav'd him on Tiberiad's day,
To see his triumphs stain'd now by defeat !

MALEK (*to himself.*)

It should be so,—and yet a pledge is made.

METCHOUB.

What pledge ?

MALEK.

To give the queen and princess freedom.
There are a sort of men, Metchoub, whose hearts,
Moulded of clay, (whose hard materials are
Proof against soft impressions, tender thoughts,)
Frame them an idol in the form of what
Their selfish feelings worship ;—let it be
Avarice of wealth, or avarice of power,
Which is ambition ; and wound up in either,
Admit no softer feelings to smooth down
These rugged traits of spirit ; but as flint,
Which only ignites with the flint or steel,
So do their bosoms, fire but by the force
Of some stern passion of the soul, and sneer
At those in whom a softer nature dwells,—
As pity, mercy, charity, and love.
But let that pass ; hear you,—as Saladin
Ordains,—it must be. Go you to the queen,
And tell her the commands, of one more great
And powerful than I, and Matilde too—

[He pauses mournfully.]

METCHOUB.

My lord, what then ?

MALEK.

Ah, what indeed !



METCHOUB.

Swerve not,

'Tis but a word, my lord.

MALEK.

Bid her prepare,

Within the *hour*, to sail for Ptolemais ;

There is a bark now ready for the seas ;

I'll not defer it to another day,—

For Love's a traitor. Metchoub, haste away.

METCHOUB.

My lord, it shall be done.

[*Exit* METCHOUB.]

MALEK.

Now I'm alone,

Oh ! heart, if I stay longer I shall fall

An everlasting traitor to myself.

For I'm like one who, led by fate, to where

Some bed of flowers sends its delicious breath,

Scenting the air with its o'erpowering odours,

Find it enclos'd within a garden, which,

Guarded by Virtue's champions, Faith and Truth,

Denies me entrance.—If impetuous blood

Stir me to storm the sanctuary, I,

In gaining what is wantonly acquir'd,

But gain a loss, in losing a fair name.

Down rebel thought ;—Ha, I have marr'd thee here,

Yet cannot dare to ponder on the act !

Honour's the path I've chosen, and will turn

The tide of feeling in its purer course.
I'll to Pelusium, Pharamia, there
Assembling the brave tribes, lead on to war,
Retrieving what men say my deeds have lost !
Then, Saladin, will Malek soon convince
His heart still feels as brother, and as prince ! [Exit.

SCENE III.

Scene, the same, a Chamber in the Palace.

Enter AGNES (alone.)

Now shall the fury of my discontent
Have scope to vent its lately stifled flame !
Deep-worn Revenge turn all its torrent on
The heads of its despisers ; and stern Hate
Set its sharp sting in action ! At this hour
Are their weak minds buoy'd up by wanton Hope,
Which likes to raise its victims on its wing,
And crown with flowers, to lead to sacrifice.
Already do they fancy they are free,—
The queen anticipating Hymen's kiss,
And that fair maid, whose charms are each a curse
On these neglected features, soothing her
With hope's and fancy's most alluring dreams !
Till I appear, as an unheeded cloud,
Which, with the sun's resplendent smile first ting'd,

Arrests no thought of danger, but, at length,
Expanding o'er the heavens, becomes more dark,
And bursts the crackling thunder from its shroud,
Blasting the promise of the morning light.
Ha, do they come?—Now, Malice, for a smile
As the fair blossom of some deadly plant,
Pleasing to sight, yet poison to the soul.

Enter BERENGERE and MATILDE.

BERENGERE.

Oh, Agnes, will you not rejoice with us!—
The prince hath promis'd freedom! and kind hope
Seldom smil'd brighter than it does to day.
'Tis grief or absence teaches us alone
The value of what we have lost or left,
And if refound, or when restor'd, the heart
Leaps in the sudden fulness of its joy,
Scarcely restraining transport within bound.

AGNES.

Rejoice, fair dame?—oh, yes, I will rejoice!
Would'st have me tell you of my joy for you,
Or grief to think our parting is so near?
For I have smiles or tears, which at small bidding
Will come profusely, and, like April time,
You know not which to call it, foul or fair.

BERENGERE.

Methinks you would be mirthful, is it so?
Oh, I have had so many hours of woe,
That mirth seems thrice as pleasing.

AGNES

Then, believe,

It will not last.

BERENGERE (*anxiously.*)

How so ?

AGNES.

Oh, know you not ?

Be ever wary of the syren—Pleasure ;
All which she glitters is not lasting treasure ;—
Swift joy oft sets as sudden as it rose,
False as the lightning, scorching where it glows.

MATILDE.

Sister, be not alarm'd ; Agnes hath known
Such changes in her short eventful life
That keen distrust is ever at her side,
To make her heart suspicious of the world.

AGNES.

Suspicious ! aye, but not without a cause.
Why, would you make my heart of alabaster ?
Or think me, like the worm, in nature patient,
As to be trampled on, and never turn ?
Oh, you would have me look upon those charms
And give the lie to reason, making pride,
Which injury inflames, both poor and puling.

BERENGERE.

Agnes, be calm, Matilde hath never given
One cause for an accusal ;—'tis the prince
Whose strong infatuation—

AGNES.

What are you ?

A woman as am I, and is not she ?—
Why our first parent, formed in innocence,
And all perfection human nature knows,
Was tempted and was won ; then what is there
In the degeneracy Time hath wrought
To make us think that you, or I, or she,
Are moulded more in purity and patience ?

MATILDE.

Agnes, you wrong me ; could you search this heart,
There would be found but kindness towards you,
And pity for your sorrows !

AGNES (*looking with contempt.*)

Pity—indeed ?

Why what is there that you should pity me,
Who stand so much in need of it yourself ?

MATILDE.

Reject it if you will, still must it flow.

AGNES.

Let me look on those features,—will they stand
The eye of scrutiny ; for Truth's fair face
Is like the pure rose, of a changeless hue,
Nor blushes deeper 'neath the sternest gaze.

MATILDE

(*going, and looking up to AGNES steadfastly.*)

Even in that attest it.

AGNES (*spitting.*)

Out on thee,
There's incantation, syren, in thy looks!
Oh, that I had the Hecate's magic spell
To shrivel thee to wrinkles with my frown.

BERENGERE (*pointing to MATILDE.*)

Peace, Agnes. Let the meekness of that face
Teach you a lesson of mild resignation.

AGNES.

Woman, I tell thee thou shalt not escape ;
There's misery in the air which thou inhalest ;
'Tis thou hast sooth'd me with thy flattering tongue,
Whilst she has robb'd me of my Malek's love ;
But thanks,—there's reparation near !

BERENGERE.

Oh, say,
What is it you would threaten with ? Is it
Our lives—our liberties ? Say what ?

AGNES.

Your lives !
Ha, ha !—I would not take a thing so vile,
But rather have you live to feel what 'tis
To be depriv'd of what you love the most.
As for your liberty—but here is one
Who comes to tell the tale, and as you preach
Of resignation it were well to hope

You knew the lesson which you fain would teach ;
The rest I leave with him, and so farewell.

[*Exit.*

*Enter METCHOUB (he salutes the queen, who leans
on MATILDE.)*

BERENGERE.

Stranger, I feel thou art a messenger
Of some unwelcome tiding. Oh, there is
In joy's forewarning looks a cheerfulness,
Like the bright rays of morning, ere the sun
Breaks forth, and ushers in the welcome day ;
But when a herald of our woe appears,
(As the ill-omen'd cloud, which rises on
The morrow of our hopes, to dim its lustre,)
So hangs the gloom on animation's brow,
Shadowing the whole with melancholy's cast.

METCHOUB.

Madam, the heart doom'd to perform a task
Where confidence must feeling's powers supplant,
Is guided not by hatred, but by honour.—
The Sultan Saladin, (whose noble name
For justice and for mercy is renown'd,)
Hath so commanded it, and who amongst
The faithful to the Koran dares to swerve,
Threaten'd to feel our holy Prophet's curse ;
And such his mandate to the prince.—“ Restore
With speed the princess to her countrymen ;

But for the queen, keep her in bondage, close,
Till Ptolemais be her ransom."

[*The queen shrieks, and falls into MATILDE'S arms.*]

MATILDE.

Harsh man,
That word hath been a dagger to her soul.
Sister look up, sweet sister !

BERENGERE (*reviving.*)

Where am I ?

Despair within thy dungeon ! Oh, Matilde,
Fly to the prince ;—entreat—implore.—Ah me ;
Each moment is an arrow in my breast,
Which Misery's hand inflicts. Fly, Matilde, fly,
His heart is not yet harden'd, he will hear—

METCHOUB.

(*Preventing MATILDE who is about to depart.*)

Lady, 'twere past all hope ; already is
The prince beyond even audience or entreaty,
For, as I enter'd here, his war-horse stood
Caparison'd to hasten to Pelusium ;
The present moment sees him far advanc'd
Without the city's portals, and his words,
At parting, were—" Inform the queen that one
More powerful than I,—commands the act,
And that a bark within the hour will sail
For Ptolemais, to conduct the princess."
With this we parted ; he onward for his journey,
And I to tell you what must be obey'd.

Behold, the ~~bark~~ now loosens her white sails ;
I must request this fair dame to prepare
For quick compliance to the mandate given.

BÉRENGERE.

(Stopping him as he is about to retire.)

Is there no hope ? Oh if you knew the pang
Of being doom'd to lone captivity !
To be as some poor bird, which, (from its mates
Snatch'd by the spoiler) is condemn'd to pine
Within the cage's solitary cell :
To see hope's flower nipt on the verge of bloom :
Be merciful for once.

METCHOUB.

It cannot be ;

Lady, prepare—our stay is now but short. *(To MATILDE.)*

[Exit METCHOUB.]

BÉRENGERE *(falling to the ground.)*

Oh, let me die, even where I lie now ;
Here unkind fortune end my sufferings,
For thou hast treated me as one condemned,
Who (for a time reprieved,) looks up to mercy ;
And when buoy'd up, to feel it most assured,
Receives the sudden sentence for his doom.
Oh, Cœur de Lion ! never more on me
Shall fall the flashes of that ardent eye.
No more ? ah no, it cannot, must not be !
Matilde, is there no hope ?

[She pauses whilst MATILDE meditates.]

Alas ! there's none,
Thy every look betrays !

MATILDE.

Yes, there is one.

BERENGERE.

Oh, where—what is it?—for I catch at hope,
E'en as the drowning sufferer does at reeds,
Although of no avail.

MATILDE.

Sister, you know
That the proportion of our forms alike,
Would (when the face is hid) prevent the eye's
Discernment of the person : custom hath
Fashion'd our dress too, so that 'neath the veil
Either may pass unnotic'd, and unknown,
Clothe yourself, then, in secret in my garments,
And thus elude the vigilance of those—

BERENGERE.

Ah, no—ah, no,—and leave thee, generous maid,
To brave the importunity of power,
Of passion, and perhaps of insult too ?

MATILDE.

Sister, there is a *power*, who gives us strength
To bear the evils which attend us here,
Resist temptation, rectify our hearts,
And calm, with resignation every grief,
If we will look to it,—and put our trust
Thro' love and faith, to its unerring laws.

Oh ! *he* who Israel's children visited
 In the wide desert, will not here desert
 The lonely captive, who looks up to *Him*,
 Knowing *His* ways are merciful and just.
 Haste to the change then, and when once embark'd,
 Feign sickness to deny all scrutiny.
 And, oh ye winds ! which waft the willing bark,
 Be ye propitious to my heart's design !
 Blow, blow your fairest breezes, so that she
 May reach her Richard's loving arms again.

BERENGERE, (*falling on her neck.*)

Oh, child of every virtue—every grace !
 Be it as you desire—and if restored,
 Where England's noble warriors are in arms,
 This voice shall raise a cry to stimulate
 Some hero's soul, to rush to your deliverance.

MATILDE.

Here comes good Norfolk ; in his hurried air
 Importance hangs : God trust it may not mar
 My anxious hopes :—

Enter NORFOLK.

My lord of Norfolk,
 What sits so heavy on your brow ?

NORFOLK.

Alas,
 My mistress, I had rais'd my hopes so high,
 Towering as some tall mountain pine, which waves
 Its head above the neighbouring forest trees,

When, lo, as if the tempest wish'd to blight
Its seeming pride in nodding o'er the rest,
And scathe it in its fury,—so did Fate
Seem to select, in humbling my high hopes ; \n
Tho' heaven best knows I am a poor old man,
Who puts his trust alone upon its mercy.

BERENGERE.

But did you hear of aught ?

NORFOLK.

Oh, I have heard

But too much for this poor aged heart to know,
Without the tear of feeling trickling down ;
For I had pictur'd brave king Richard's looks
In having his lov'd queen restor'd to him,
Yet find that Hope hath but the wanton play'd,
Cheating us with her smiles.

MATILDE.

I know, my lord

Your love and loyalty to all who bear
The surname of Plantagenet. And now,
Another proof, but to confirm the rest,
Awaits your zeal and honour ; you are nam'd
To bear attendance to me on my journey ;
But are there listeners near ?

NORFOLK.

What means your grace ?

MATILDE.

Norfolk as there is mercy *there*, be true
To what I tell you !

NORFOLK.

Heaven be my witness,

As I now appeal!

BERENGERE.

Have you determin'd,

Oh, Matilde, in this generous act of yours?

MATILDE.

It is not from the hastiness of blood,
Nor sudden impulse, to appear to be
That, which in some hearts, the succeeding hour
Would wish undone, which leads me to this act—
But the sincerity of love which prompts,
And piety which strengthens my firm will :—
Norfolk, it is your queen you have to guard,
Who, under my disguise, attempts escape.

BERENGERE.

Oh, as the hour approaches, my poor heart
Fails me, beneath the thought of separation ;
Tho' heaven can witness how I love my lord,
'Tis a dear price to pay for freedom's blessing !

MATILDE.

Sister, be firm ;—'Tis not a time to sink
In an endeavour now so near fulfilment.
Norfolk, do you be true and vigilant ;
In the important trust repos'd in you.

NORFOLK.

(*Falling on his knees before MATILDE, and taking
her hand.*)

Oh, my young mistress, virtuous above

The charm of virtue! beautiful beyond
Beauty's soft ray! and sanctified in all
Religion consecrates!—let my aged breast
Pour forth its fond farewell. This poor heart yearns
In leaving thee, so lovely and so lone.

MATILDE.

To Him, who knoweth what it is to aid
The slaving, sick, and sorrowful I look;
Oh, they are never friendless who can hope
That by their actions they have earn'd the smiles,
And favour of Omnipotence! for all
Know to distinguish betwixt good and ill,
Tho' few keep firmly in the righteous course.
But hush,—here comes the herald of our doom.
Sister, be firm; Norfolk, remember me.

Enter METCHOUB.

METCHOUB.

Lady, is all prepar'd?—Already does
The bark unmoor, and, its white sails unfurl'd,
Shew signal of departure.

MATILDE.

We now crave
But some few moments for our long adieu,
The which, unheard by other ears than ours
Prompts us to plead retirement—therefore, chief,
Let balmy patience be your guest the while,
Nor this last grace deny. Norfolk attend us.
[*Exeunt BERENGERE, led by MATILDE, and followed
by NORFOLK.*]

METCHOUB.

How shrewdly temping is a female's tongue !
 Oh, woman, thou art eloquent indeed
 In smiles ! the incantation of thy looks !—
 And faith and resolution, need to cast
 The anchor of our nobler nature firmly,
 To stand the whirlpool current of desire,
 And stop one swerve from duty or from honour.

Enter MASTER OF A VESSEL.

Well, master, does the tide serve, and the wind
 Sit fair into the bosom of the sail ?

MASTER.

Aye, at the present ; but unless we haste
 To take the fulness of its stream, before
 The tide begins to slacken in its course,
 The wind, but lulling in the softest breath
 From what it just now wantons with, will not
 Aid us enough to clear the port ; therefore
 It rests with you to hasten forth this dame
 If our departure is necessitous.

METCHOUB.

What—ho ! my English nobles—ho, within. (*knocking.*)
 Master, betake thee to thy ship, we soon
 Will follow, see that all things are prepar'd.
 What, ho, within !

[*Exit* MASTER.]

Enter NORFOLK.

NORFOLK.

Oh, what an hour is this !

METCHOUB.

Signior, return, and bid our fair charge haste ;
Sighs are the slaves of sorrow,—we of both ;
And tears of parting are as useless drops,
To revive hope, as water to the desert.
Go then, and say, that time admits no more
Moments for unavailing griefs, or prayers.

NORFOLK.

Be not harsh, Saracen, for you may need,
'Ere long, the act of grace you would deny.
Here comes the princess with her mournful train :
She,—beautiful as chaste Diana's orb !
With handmaids round her, as the halo pure
Encircling it ! when heaven with mazy light
Suffus'd appears,—and the soft air, weeps dew.

Enter BERENGERE with female attendants, covered to her feet with a long veil ; she crosses the stage, METCHOUB leading the way, NORFOLK and the attendants following.—MATILDE enters, covered also with a veil, they wave hands.—Exeunt all but MATILDE ; who falls on her knees, and raising her veil, prays in silence.—The scene closes.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*Scene lies in the camp of the Crusaders, near
Ptolemais.*

*The council hall in the Royal Pavilion. Enter GUY
LUSIGNAN, and CONRAD of Montferrat, on oppo-
site sides.*

LUSIGNAN.

Know, Conrad of Montferrat, we are met
As shall the kings of England, and of France,
Soon to decide our rights to this estate.
Did I say rights?—'tis false, I should have said
Our title rather, for in you no right,
In reason, or in honour, can be made
Since I have borne the character of king.

CONRAD.

The peacock bears fine feathers, although known
To be a timorous and foolish bird,
Ill-suiting his bright plumage —What is there

That Lusignan aspires to—Conrad's claim
Falls short in competition of?—

LUSIGNAN.

In all;—

In right—that I have worn Jerusalem's crown ;
Affinity—as late Sybilla's lord ;
And in election, as the people's choice!

CONRAD.

Talk you of right, when you, yourself gave up,
All claim to Saladin, which there are lords
Summon'd in council here, will well attest ?
Vaunt you of title, by your marriage vows,
When death for wisest purposes hath broke
The link, and laid Sybilla with her sires ?
And, to the people's choice, go speak it forth
Amidst the multitude, and see if shouts,
Or hisses, meet your importunities ?

LUSIGNAN.

False knight, give not loose limits to your tongue,
By heavens! there's one that will not brook your words.

CONRAD.

Unclasp thy sword then, executioner ;
If valour is to be the offering made ?
I've been too long a soldier, to require
Long conference within, to rouse to action.

LUSIGNAN.

What title hast thou, traitor, to the crown ?
Didst thou not own allegiance to my rights,
When Salem saw me with Sybilla crowned ?

And is it now, because the king of France,
(Who, jealous of the noble Richard's power,)
Opposes every enterprize he plans !
Is it, that this, hath made thy soul ambitious ?

CONRAD.

Why, what presumption is it on thy part,
Giving fair truth the lie, and slandering
The name of greatness with thy dastard tongue?
Now let thy arm assert thy calumnies
If thy false nature dares.

LUSIGNAN.

**This is the council,
Unfit place for bloodshed ;—let it be said
Where we may freely draw.**

CONRAD.

**Caution is but
A better name for cowardice.**

LUSIGNAN.

Passion may fire forbearance. **Beware,**

CONRAD.

Aye, it may,
But Phœbus, must revert its course, and roll
Eastward, ere that shall come to pass in thee.

LUSIGNAN.

By heavens! it is too much; thou hellish knight!
I'll make the chamber echo with thy groans.

CONRAD.

What think'st thou that another Salisbury,

Creeps forth in me, to let thee steal behind
His back to strike the blow, and play the villain ?

LUSIGNAN.

Ha, ha !

They draw and rush on one another, when the trumpets flourish, and enter RICHARD and PHILIP on either side, attended by the DUKES OF LANCASTER and GLOUCESTER, JOCELIN DE MONTMORENCY, and HUGUES DE CHARTRES. The opponents drop their swords.

RICHARD.

Hold, hold—for shame, valiants, put up your swords.
Sovereign of France, I see the grievous end
Of these dissensions, (mastering our hearts
To purports of internal strife, not war,)
Will be, the dissolution of our bands ;
And the high cause, which led us to contest
With Syria's sons, the holy spot of Christ !
(Which place of miracles, and martyrdom
Is sanctified, to all who love his name :)
I say, the cause will prove a brand, instead
Of a distinction, glorious to our names.
Is not the valiant Lusignan, who here
Confronts his adversary, the true chief
On whom the crown of Palestine should sit ?

PHILIP.

Not more than England's monarch can lament
The cause, which sows the seeds of jealousy
Amidst our host, assembled in the name

Of heaven and all its glorious desires :
 Not more, can his, than Philip's mind, survey
 With grief, this civil jar of rival claims !
 And yet, not calmly can he view a crown
 Disposed to one, when justice bids his heart
 Stand forth, in a competitor's support.

RICHARD.

Be it ev'n so,—yet, oh,—how ill it suits
 The spirit of our cause, the majesty
 Of our high station, and the energies
 Of all our people, now in arms around,
 To hear our rancour in inglorious deeds.
 Have Acre, and have Ptolemais, seen
 Our thousand warriors fall in conquering them,
 To bring no other guerdon to our toils ?
 And, oh ! ye English nobles, men of steel,
 William, Earl Ferrers—Robert Scrope, of Barton,
 And the brave Pigot, Surrey's seneschal—
 Silvester, Mowbray, Talbot, and St. John—
 Who lie interred 'neath Acre's vanquish'd towers ;
 Which saw ye die like heroes for our fame !
 Is this the fair return for all your valour ?
 Your monuments should be our bright success,
 That after ages might look back, in pride
 Of glory, to embalm your memories.

PHILIP.

And hath not France too lost her bravest sons,
 Whom war's stern arm hath crumbled to the dust ?
 But the brave Conrad has my word, and who

Shall say, that Philip ever forfeited
The promise which his heart swore to perform ?

RICHARD.

Why, if a hasty word is dearer, than
The puissant cause, and aspirations bright
For fame, and time's immortal obsequies !
So let it speak of you ; but do not all
The leaders here, decree for Lusignan ?
Did not his marriage, and the people's oath
Confirm the title, and supplant all claim ?
Oh, why persist then in his rival's cause
When all things tend to say—'tis Lusignan ?

PHILIP.

Self-interest oft blinds reason ; England's king
When he denotes us obstinate, 'gainst what
His heart adheres to with perversion's will,
Would be the argument of his own scorn.
Why we might say, that day is night, and call
The world perverse ; who would not think so too ?

RICHARD.

Monarch, I say, did Lusignan not live,
Then might his rival, Conrad, urge his right.

PHILIP.

Behold the title of this valiant chief,
Espous'd to Isabel, Sybilla's sister,
To whom the lord of Thoron was allied,
Who falsified and forfeited her bed,
When she sought refuge in brave Conrad's arms !

To whom she is affianced by our church :
Has he no claim then as Jerusalem's king ?

RICHARD.

But Isabella's is the youngest branch ;
And there are minds, not very scrupulous,
Who charge the contract, which made her his spouse.—

PHILIP.

Perchance, and question too, the word of Christ !
Oh ! what a faulty world is this, that men
Can find abettors in the vilest cause ;
And bear down truth and justice to the ground,
Where falsehood should lie howling.

RICHARD.

Is it to me,
Proud Philip, yet no more than I, in power !
To me, who first on Acre's tottering wall
Planted the standard, and triumphant cross !
That accusation would brawl forth its threats
And say, that honour did not grace my cause ?
By heavens ! there is small valour in the world,
If England's king should brook a thing so foul.

CONRAD.

And, Cœur de Lion, truth hath little hold
Of honesty, when kings can slander men ;
Though royal licence may out-step the bounds
Which prudence justifies.

LUSIGNAN.

Audacious chief,
Who bids thee, arrogate thy insults here ?

RICHARD.

Hold, Lusignan, who dares affront the ear
Of Richard, seldom 'scapes the chastisement,
Which the act merits ; and yet there are some
So worthless of observance, that they rouse
As little anger, as a beldame's rant.

LUSIGNAN.

My liege, I honour you, and when I hear
Presumption, thus address the noble Richard,
Here is the foremost answer. [*Striking his sword.*]

CONRAD. (*To LUSIGNAN.*)

Vaunter, stop,
For if report speaks truly, courage fires
More daringly from thee in word, than action.

LUSIGNAN.

Ha, say'st thou so, I would not have thee build
Security too strongly ; know the vain
Are ever victims of their foolish words.
Was it thy mistress urged thee to this claim,
To cajole thee as she did Thoron's lord ?

CONRAD.

Mistress, that word is death to any minion.

[*CONRAD is about to draw his sword, which
PHILIP prevents.*]

PHILIP.

We charge you, on allegiance to ourselves,
And suitable respect to our high person,
To keep the peace!—here comes, a reverent sire,
Whose counsel is the arbiter of all.

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF TYRE.

TYRE.

Ye, chiefs of Europe, rulers of its fate,
Masters of mighty nations, ministers
Of heaven's unbounded mercies, to whose hands
The rod of justice, (manfully to raise,
Or mercifully spare,) it hath bequeathed:—
Nobles, of France and England, summon'd here,
Whose valour, when ye all are in your tombs
Will be recorded in immortal theme:
Templars, who, at the altar of the Lord
Have sworn to fight but in the righteous cause,
For which we all have travelled here, and toil'd:
Is this the ministry of fame? Is this
The glorious longing for which you essay'd?
Is all our labour turned to this effect?
And have so many warriors perished then
To prove but paving stones to your disgrace?
Are ye now met, the chosen band of Christ?
Or, are ye, madmen, brawling in debate?
The Saracen, whom ye would so despise,
Will mock your misdeeds into merriments;
And whilst dissension sets the arm of strife
In action 'mongst yourselves, will seize the hour
To turn disaster on your differing hearts.
Oh! kings, and warriors, shame upon your heads!
Defrauding honour, sacrificing fame,

And covering with ingloriousness, the names
Which should be blazon'd in immortal praise.

RICHARD.

My lord of Tyre, how justly do thy words
Convey the lash of censure on our strifes.

PHILIP.

How now? does England's monarch acquiesce
In words which cast a stigma on himself.

RICHARD.

I speak, King Philip, in the same assent
Which I have ever spoken,—one man's weal
Should not be dearer than the weal of all,
Though Lusignan has justice on his side.

PHILIP.

And should I say that Conrad, has it too?—
I have my obstinacies, as may you,
And 'twere as well to reason with the wind,
As hold communion with the headstrong mind.
But what does Tyre's learned prelate say?

TYRE.

My liege,
I come here as the servant of the High,
And not the flatterer of worldly men.
Mankind are all too bigotted to self
In purpose and opinion;—what, we wish,
We do, despite of reason and remonstrance!
For, as the essence which intoxicates
And blinds, so power, with petulance, and pride
Lead men to error, arrogance and sin.

Pride is the parent of perversity
From which all dark propensities arise ;
And each stern struggle for the worldly aim
Of power, and pelf, is poison to the soul,
Dividing it from heaven, and its rewards.

PHILIP.

Too true, just churchman. . . .

TYRE.

Where lies glory then?

Is it the notoriety of name,
Which men seek after through regardless means?
Is it the greatness gained by guilt? or peace
Which goodness lives contented in? I scorn
The end of war for rapine or domain ;
The warrior's sword in tyranny, becomes
A brand, and not a beacon to his fame ;
But our's is drawn for heaven, and in a cause
Divine, and deified by God's assent.
Cast out then envy from your hearts, it is
A thing, which in ignoble breasts alone
Should find a haven—girt your armour round
With feelings, purified by thoughts of Christ ;
Think not your blood too precious to redeem,
The tomb of him, who gave his blood for you ;
But beyond all, great kings, and nobles brave,
Waste not these weighty hours in loose harangues,
But what unto your wisdom seemeth best,
To soothe the jarring interests of these chiefs,
Let me now urge you, forthwith to decide.

RICHARD,

Lord prelate, if my royal colleague here
Consents.—Decision I would fain confide
To your integrity, to calm this feud ;
For an opinion from thy lips, at least
Should be disinterested.

PHILIP.

I agree,

Yet, prelate in entrusting it to thee,
Still must protest before these chiefs around,
That whether it be “ Aye,” or “ No,” it is
Consideration of the general good,
Alone, inclines my ear to this proposal ;
For I am still unshaken in belief
Of Conrad of Montferrat’s claim.

TYRE.

Monarch !

My lips must then be silent, it is thus
We ever go astray, asking advice
To find if it coincides with our
Form’d purpose, and, if not, we thank the kind
Desire of benefit, yet in resolve
Are quite as self-willed as before.

PHILIP.

Not so ;

How many are the circumstances, which
Fortune forestalls, and fate forewarns us of,
Which time determines without our consent.
How many acts whose bias to perform

May silence our reluctance to comply.
 Did Brutus draw the dagger to bereave
 His friend of life, or Rome of Freedom's foe ?
 Oh, 'twere humanity to hope, that he
 Had heart-aches 'ere his hand was so upheld ;
 Or when the shipwreck'd mariners design
 Some one amidst their mates, a sacrifice
 To save the famish'd numbers, is it not
 The greater good which then necessitates
 The lesser evil, and not wantonness ?
 Ev'n so, my acquiescence is obtained,
 Although my heart reluctantly complies.

TYRE.

There's scarce one feeling, save ingratitude
 Which cannot plead, the more or less excuse.—
 Then, who shall say it is a fault to feel
 For others, though the circumstance of fate,
 Necessity, or the requiting law
 Of equity, impartially adjudg'd,
 Be the irremediable cause of woe.—
 The eye of pity will not less suffuse
 With tears, allowing still that all is just.—
 The guilty criminal with all his sins
 Staring around his brow, will raise regret,
 If it were only at the awful thought,
 What doth await him in another world.—
 But when the unavoidable decree
 Of destiny, o'ertakes the nearer ties
 Of friendship or affection, oh ! 'tis then,

That charity becomes us, as the type
Of heaven, benignant, fostering, and kind.

RICHARD.

Lord-prelate, by Plantagenet, I swear
I will abide most strictly by thy word.
I honour valour much, but, by this sword,
I reverence virtue more.

TYRE.

Most puissant chiefs,
Must I proceed then in this weighty task?

PHILIP.

Speak on.

[RICHARD bows assent.]

TYRE.

Then hear me, sov'reigns, 'tis the glow
Of warm enthusiasm which impels
The force of stern remonstrance on your minds.
Oh! should we fail, and fall through our misdeeds,
After the toils—the travel and attempts—
The triumphs and temerities of fight
By sea and land—the sacrifice of those
Who gave their lives that we might profit, both
In our attainments, as by their example.—
Oh! should we fail, then would a curse, as great
As an offended Deity denounced
On Israel and its offspring, be on us;
And our base names, be on the tide of time
Engulph'd in darkness, even, as befell
The sinful cities, blasted in their pride,
Where now yon Dead Sea rolls its bitter waves.

PHILIP.

Come, churchman to the sentence, there hath been
But too much idle conference in this cause.

TYRE.

Nought rests for me but to decide forthwith !
Since all are so well vers'd in these disputes.
Then be it thus,—that Lusignan retains
The crown of Palestine, 'till death dissolves
The union of his body and his soul ;
Then, to devolve to Conrad, lord of Tyre,
Should he be the survivor, to whose heirs
Perpetual sovereignty shall be annex'd.

RICHARD.

We thank you, prelate.

LUSIGNAN,

(And the rest of the lords on his side.)

All join their thanks, huzza !

PHILIP.

What means this insult, and irreverent burst
Of laughter and of vulgar acclamation ?
Does the bold verdict swell your little minds,
As water bubbles, which the school-boy's sport
Blows from the hollow pipe ?

CONRAD.

Yes,—paltry slaves

Who ape their master.

RICHARD.

Hold, thou daring knight.

[To CONRAD.

I tell thee, king of France, for I must speak

[To PHILIP.]

The truth withheld, which blisters on my tongue—

'Tis jealousy which kindles all this strife,

And if my heart divines not grossly ill,

It plays the hypocrite, screen'd 'neath a mask

For the pretending prudery of right.

PHILIP.

Such taunts are quickly answer'd, if 'tis so?

Nobles of France, come follow me, retort

Serves but to further choler; we disdain

To use our threats as braggarts do their blades;

Lords, we shall hold a council in our camp.

[*Exeunt PHILIP, haughtily, followed by CONRAD,
MONTMORENCY, and the French Lords.*]

TYRE.

Oh! how these discords do afflict my soul!

RICHARD.

Why,—let the haughty—hasty monarch go!—

Let him draw off his legions—there is still

Enough of English valour in the land,

Join'd to the few staunch friends, who have despis'd

The fickle, fretful temper, and the vain

Feeling of false pre-eminence in France.

The arm of Cœur de Lion, still hath strength

And courage, to oppose unnumber'd foes,

When leagu'd with such hearts as he sees around—

Is it not so my valiants?

LANCASTER.

Yes, my liege.

GLOUCESTER.

But should the Saracen, who gathers now
His tribes, (as locusts darkening o'er the soil)
Attack us 'midst dissensions—oh! my liege,
And France withdraw her succour at that hour
Of peril,—think how fickle fortune is,
And fate, too oft, how adverse.

RICHARD.

Lord of Gloucester,

We want no ravens here with ominous cries
To croak the falling of the stars, nor seers
To prophecy the phantasies of beldames.

TYRE.

I pray your pardon, sovereign, for methinks,
The Duke of Gloucester did but counsel such,
With feelings for the safety of our cause.

GLOUCESTER.

My liege, this arm hath more than once sustain'd
The shock of battle in thy father's wars,
And it had hop'd not to have merited
Reproof from his brave son.

RICHARD.

Gloucester, I thank

Thy loyalty, perchance, I spake in haste,
But when the hour of energy arrives,
It neither does become ourselves, nor cause,

To stand in the cold shiv'ring fits of fear
And woman-hearted tremble thus at shadows.

[*A trumpet sounds.*]

But, hark!—there is some herald's sound—proceed
And learn the cause. [*Exit GLOUCESTER.*]

LUSIGNAN.

What, should it be the queen
And princess, who.....

TYRE.

Oh, Lusignan, raise not
Such visionary thoughts! you little know
The heart of Saladin, deep-skilled in all
The policies of war....

LUSIGNAN (*starting*).

But see, a woman!

Enter BERENGERE, followed by GLOUCESTER.

BERENGERE.

Where is?—Ah! me, my lord, my king, once more—

[*embracing RICHARD.*]

RICHARD.

And, once again, my tender Berengere!
Joy comes thrice welcome when so unexpected,

BERENGERE.

Oh! 'tis a joy which fancy often rais'd,
And yet so oft destroy'd, that hope, at last,
Became almost despairing.

RICHARD.

Let it be,

The sweeter and more lasting now 'tis come—
But, where's my sister? where that pious maid?

TYRE.

Ah! where indeed? for fears on fears arise,
My queen—thrice welcome to your noble lord.

BERENGERE.

Father, I hail thee, with a daughter's love—
Yet amidst all the blessings of return,
Even, when love just seal'd upon the lips
Of a fond husband, should awake but bliss—
Oh! that one grief should hang around the heart,
Striking, as death's knell, 'midst a festival—

TYRE.

Pardon my apprehensions, yet relieve
The weight of fear which presses on my heart,—
Unfold the mystery.

BERENGERE.

To you, oh king,
Not as my husband, but the brother of
That virtuous princess,—I address myself—
Mine is the fault, that you behold her not,
And her's the sacrifice, that I am here.
Oh! heaven should send a herald down on earth
To do her virtues and her goodness justice.

TYRE (*anxiously*).

But is she safe? and Malek——

RICHARD (*with vehemence*).

What of him?

Ha, I suspect, has love been on the wing
Infusing there his subtleties?

BERENGERE.

My lord, I humbly beg
Suspend all surmise, and at least await
The issue of my tale—Oh! as I said,
Neither towards heav'n, nor earth hath she offended!

TYRE.

My life shall be the forfeiture—but haste
Fair queen, and ease these anxious beating hopes.

BERENGERE.

Thou, knowest well, kind prelate, the first tale
Of all our woes, and when depriv'd of thee
Captivity became the more forlorn,
Although prince Malek was a generous foe;
For even of an enemy, candour should
Uphold its character and speak of men
As it hath found them ;—yet, alas ! 'tis not
In all that luxury can grant, the bloom,
The beauty of the earth, with fruits and flowers
Enamelling its fields, nor gorgeous halls
Array'd in silk, and gold, nor vestibules
With spicy viands to satiate the taste
And luscious sherbets cooling summer's thirst—
Not these in rich profusion can delight,
If what we love is absent from our hearts
And the poor cottager, who toils his days,
Yet whom the sunset lightens to his home,
Where calm content and fond endearments glow,

More real enjoyment feels, than all the wealth
And splendours of a palace could afford
Uncheer'd by friendship or affection's smile.

RICHARD.

Ah! Berengere,—there thy soft nature spoke
So tender, loving, pitiful, and kind.—
But to the sequel.

BERENGERE.

Oh, my lord, I fear
I shall see anger mark'd upon your brow
When I relate it—yet, perchance, you will
Pardon the feeling which enforc'd my mind
To act the selfish part which gave me to you.—

RICHARD.

Thou knowest, Berengere, that in thy smile
There is more sway, than in a thousand swords,
To have thee is enough, since 'tis the first
And dearest blessing to relieve all care.

BERENGERE.

Behold then, sorrow filled each flagging hour,
And hope which to the most despairing gleams,
Had almost ceased to glimmer, in whose stead
Pale melancholy came, who seated by,
In plaintive tones sigh'd forth her mournful strain.
I knew the feelings of prince Malek's soul,
Who passionately proffer'd hand and heart,
Infatuated by our sister's charms;
And though his offer was rejected, as
Became a princess and a Christian dame;

Denied, and yet desirous to evince
How pure his passion, at her earnest plea:
Freedom at length was promis'd to us all;
When, the next hour brought Saladin's commands
That I should be detain'd in captive chains
To be the ransom of some chief or city,
Whilst she, who had enchanted by her smiles,
And had subdued and soften'd Malek's soul
From the stern, active, energies of war,
(Which had arousd the Sultan's deepest ire,)
Should be sent quickly to the Christian camp!
Oh! they who 've known, what 'tis to have their joys
Nipp'd in the bud, can fancy my distress!
It seem'd as hopeless to me, as the lot
Of the poor mariner, who finds his bark
By the rude tempest, rudder-less, and wreck'd.

TYRE.

Speak on, oh! queen, for thou art free'd, and she
The captive of the Saracen.

BERENGERE.

Father,

Too oft the fancied idols of the world
Our wayward natures cling to—yet, perchance,
Affection may enforce its tender plea;
When for the dearer ties of love and life,
Our spirits wrestle with the fate, which would
Part us from them, through mortal feuds or death.
I love my husband, heav'n can well attest
How sorrow had worn down this youthful frame,

When Matilde (with a feeling like to that
Which the all-righteous Jesus breath'd for man,)
Offer'd herself a sacrifice for me;—
That I—cloth'd in her raiment should depart,
And in disguise, deceive our wary foes.
How it succeeded—I am the reply—
But she rewarded—

TYRE (*fervently*).

Heav'n, will sure repay.

Now, let our prayers be offer'd for her safety.
Alas, the strongest have been known to fail
When all around the tempter lays his snares.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

My liege, the lord of Montmorency waits:
To have an audience with your highness.

RICHARD.

Go,—

Conduct this peer of France into our presence.

[*Exit ATTENDANT.*

My lords, this is some message from the king—
Perhaps, it is to sue for terms of peace,
Shewing remorse for these outrageous broils.
He shall find Richard liberal, yet loth
To own one wrong to these aspiring Franks.

Enter MONTMORENCY.

Welcome, brave Montmorency, once again—

I lack not candour to confess the truth
 And give each man his merit, foe or friend;
 True wisdom never undervalues aught.
 What tidings from your sovereign?

MONTMORENCY.

Royal chief,
 In grief, I tell you of his determined will
 Forthwith to march for France, but at the strong
 And steadfast intercession of his peers,
 Leaves a choice legion of ten thousand men;
 Of whom as chief he has appointed me.
 I crave your friendship.

RICHARD.

Why, 'twere bravely done—
 Give me your hand, Plantagenet ne'er holds
 An enmity at heart, beyond the hour.
 My lord, I know you brave, and by God's will
 The Saracen shall feel the force of our
 United efforts,—let us from this time,
 Henceforward, be sworn brethren in arms.
 Come Lusignan.

LUSIGNAN.

Your highness, we are all
 Favour'd by fate in having your example;
 I greet you, peer. But with such courtesy
 As Lucifer, the virtuous. (*Aside.*)

LANCASTER.

Let me, too,
 Salute thee, peer.

GLOUCESTER.

And I.

TYRE.

Now let me seal

This compact of brave hearts with holy words—
Without the voice of heav'n there is no hope—
Without the fear of God, there is no good—
Let us then praise, and profit must ensue. *[All bow.]*

BERENGERR.

My gracious lord, and husband, I have yet,
Ere we break up this dignified assembly
To counsel our request

RICHARD.

Oh, I have said

That Berengere holds Richard in command
At all things—charitable, kind, and true.

BERENGERR.

That needs no testimony—but to these
Aspiring not! as present, I would fain
Address my suit,—oh! it is one, in which
Valour shall be repaid by virtue's smile,
And honour hold its badge of triumph, from
The hand of beauty.

MONTMORENCY.

'Twere a cause, fair queen

To make hope spread its amplest wings, indeed—
And Emulation breathe each warm desire
To win so fair a prize.

LUSIGNAN.

There shall be more
Than one aspirant if I marvel right?—
Fair queen of England quiet our suspense.

BÉRENGÈRE.

When sorrow saw me ready to depart,
And leave so dear a tie in stranger's hands,
I thought of all the warriors young and brave,
Who, at the call of woman in distress,
Would draw their glittering falchions; and although
Mild resignation by sweet hope suffus'd,
Sat upon Matilde's cheek, as lovely, as
The beams of Cynthia, on a silvery lake
Balm'd in the tranquil of a summer's eve;
I sooth'd my bitter feelings, with the vow
That I would tell the story of her woes;
And rouse the arm of valour, youth and pride
To rush to her deliverance; here is then
My brief recital,—'tis for ye,—oh! chiefs
To turn such hopes into realities.

MONTMORENCY.

Behold this sword, so often drawn, I swear
It shall no more be sheath'd, until you hear
Its toils for England's princess,—when it fails
May Montmorency fall.

LUSIGNAN.

I will not vaunt
So much as Montmorency; let the deed

When it is destined, meet with its desert.—
I hold King Richard as security.

RICHARD.

Lord of Jerusalem, I have spoke, at times,
Of this same sister, in high colour'd words ;—
That she possesses, what in woman kind
Are deem'd their ornaments—virtue and beauty—
So far, then, as my wishes can avail,
Will urge her to look graciously upon
The heart, whose deeds, devoted are to her.

LUSIGNAN.

Enough, I have thy promise.

MONTMORENCY.

And for me,

The deed shall be a guerdon to itself.

RICHARD. (*Interrupting LUSIGNAN.*)

Hold, Lusignan, for silence oft is wisdom.—
My voice shall nominate a chosen band,
To whom, as leaders, I appoint ye both ;
Knights of the Virgin, shall be your distinction !—
Here cross your swords.

[MONTMORENCY and LUSIGNAN cross their swords.

Lord Prelate, give them grace.—

TYRE.

Chiefs, may the Lord of Hosts your guardian be,
And sanctify your hearts, as well as swords.—
Think not of mortal grace, but of the grace
Of Him who made ; whose mercy be your need.

RICHARD.

It is concluded !—now my Lords, I pray,
If ye have aught to do, use all despatch,
That 'ere three suns have set, ye may depart.—
A herald shall proclaim it through the camp—
You shall not lack for followers in your cause.
I have some words of secrecy for both,
Ere we all join our hands in our adieux.
Let us retire.—Come, Berengere, my love;
May our hopes prosper.—

TYRE.

And may heav'n approve.

[*Exeunt all but LUSIGNAN.*]

LUSIGNAN. (*Solus.*)

Why named the King this Montmorency, when
The promise which but yesterday he gave,
Made me believe I had no rival here ?
And this is he whose hand in amity,
And words, I must bear smiling with.—But stay,
The intercourse which I have had with man
Must make me cunning too ;—hypocrisy
Was made to serve ambitious, crafty minds.—
He who would use the world as it doth him,
Must play the hypocrite, and seem most fair
When he intends most hazard for the prize ;—
Let Fortune see this fair dame in our power,
Safe from the Saracen, and Time shall speak
But faintly of my sway o'er Richard's mind,

If to my purposes he prove not kind.—
 Now Flattery to thy footstool—Fortune shine
 On Lusignan—so Fate shall see her mine. [Exit.

SCENE II.

Scene lies in the Camp of SALADIN.

Enter SALADIN and METCHOUB.

METCHOUB.

Hear me, my Sultan—may the Prophet doom
 My spirit to the shades of Eblis, if
 I have deceived—

SALADIN.

Slave are these arms to toil,
 This brain to throb, and this proud heart to beat,
 All for the cause of Islam, and its creed,
 To see deception put to nought my plans ?
 And indolence, indifference, destroy
 Its highest hopes of glory ?—Here, I swear
 By Mahomet, I will not spare the blood
 Not even of a brother, should I find
 Things as I now suspect them.

METCHOUB.

Will you hear,
My Lord, and Caliph, and be once convinced
Thy servant is not false?

SALADIN.

Well, slave, speak on.

METCHOUB.

Sultan, a heart more faithful in your cause,
Ne'er hasten'd on its mission with more zeal,
Than I to Malek; to whom I disclosed
Your mandate, which admitted no delay.—
Alas! it grieves your servant to describe
How blinded in the frenzy of his love
I found the Prince——

SALADIN. (*Vehemently.*)

Ha! Metchoub, would'st thou speak
That damned, dark dishonour to our race?

METCHOUB.

Pardon your servant—I will to the rest.
Behold, your brother gave me his commands,
And for Pelusium tore himself away;—
I hasten'd the departure of this dame,
And all seem'd fortun'd to my brightest hopes;—
The bark, unmoor'd, was flapping her broad sails,
And the fair breeze, as blown by Fortune's breath;
Forth came the Nazarene, veil'd from our view—
I did not think——

SALADIN.

Curse on thy misled thoughts——

I warrant had it been a sum of gold
To fill thy coffers, thou hadst reckon'd it,
Nor let the hand who paid thee play the villain.

METCHOUB.

Even as you will—your servant has no plea
To offer for imprudence—he but pleads
His heart's integrity.—'Tis for his prince,
To spare or punish.—

[METCHOUB kneels at the Sultan's feet.

SALADIN. (*To himself.*)

By the name of Him

Who rules the faithful, I have not the wrath
To visit evil chance with darker deeds ;—
Oppressors have no pity—they but judge
Of facts by fate or fortune !—I am not
Unmerciful, though mighty.—Rise up, slave,
I will not pass thy sentence in my ire ;—
Send Kaled to my presence: [Exit Metchoub.

Oh ! I could weep,

Even as a dam at her ungrateful child,
To hear of Malek's frailties and neglect.—
To think the pride of Saladin must stoop
In knowing that 'midst all the followers
Of the great Prophet, one of his proud line
Should, (as the osier bending at the breath
Of the hot, sickly south wind,) so be shook
By woman's wanton wiles.—I will not doom
Destruction yet, by an unguarded vow ;
But, should he stain the tablets of our race,

Not all the blood of Ali shall redeem
His soul from my stern sentence.—I have heard
Of fathers dooming children for their sins,
Who could not feel more love than I possess
For this lost brother.—Justice has its plea,
But mercy none, where guilt's premeditate.

Enter KALED.

KALED.

What would our mighty prince?

SALADIN.

Fidelity!

The first of virtues.

KALED.

And which I revere,

Alla forbid that I should be suspected.

SALADIN.

(Surveying him from head to foot.)

I have had fairer looks to falsify
As fervent promises.—Oh! when the heart
Which should be truest to our friendship, fails,
And sorrow finds a canker at its core,
Sapping the growth of faith and honour there,
Man hath just reason to suspect the world!—
Then why not thou?—Dost think that thy meek face
Is proof enough to judge?—Tell me, thou slave,
Of what report am I?

KALED.

Most mighty prince,

It is not for one subject to pronounce

His sovereign's merit !—'tis the voice of all
Which should decide.

SALADIN.

Yet, still I tell thee, speak
Honest, and fearlessly.

KALED.

Oh ! most renown'd,
If all were like to you, greatness had been
Too common—goodness scarcely deem'd a virtue.

SALADIN.

By Mahomet, thou liest, flattering fool ;
Thy heart's materials are like all mankind's,
Fawning and false :—what thinkst thou I'm above
The common frailties natural to all—
Pride and ambition ?—'Tis the curse of kings
To have none round them who dare speak the truth ;
And pamper'd up by praise, can rarely judge,
Hypocrisy so easily is worn ;
Friends turning flatterers—favourites proving foes—
And Fortune their sole oracle for fame ;
They live too oft the puppets of the scene,
Court'd by all men, and cared for by none.

KALED.

Alas ! my Lord, I think you may rely
On one true subject in your servant here.

SALADIN.

Why, 'twere as well to trust thee as another—
Doom'd to the common frailties of mankind,
Since I cannot reply that thou art false.

KALED.

Alla, bear witness, as I swear to you.

SALADIN.

Come, hither, then.—Kaled, thy ear hath heard
Of the dark cloud which hangs around the brow
Of the distemper'd Malek.—I would fain
Arouse him from that frenzy of the soul
Ere our hearts fall into those civil strifes
Which we all sneer at in our Christian foes.
Go thou, this hour then, to Prince Malek's camp;
Tell him that Saladin, commands the quick
Departure of the Princess to her friends;
That done, he hasten forth to join our powers—
One day's delay shall be the loss of all,
My love—his fame—his honour—nay, *his life!*
Be not forgetful.—By our Koran's curse
On the unfaithful, it shall fare with thee
Worse than the wolf beneath the lion's jaws,
Shouldst thou desert; or else deceive my trust.

KALED.

I bow in strict obedience to your word—
So let me suffer if I prove untrue.

SALADIN.

Now haste thee to caparison thy steed—
Bid Metchoub see the Satraps are prepar'd,
And keep their tribes all ready for the field;—
Then to my tent again, ere ye depart;
Haste, for obedience shews a willing heart. [Exeunt.]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Scene lies at Cesarea.

Enter MALEK, alone.

Where do I wander?—Whither does the spell
Which is upon me lead my suffering soul?
Ye spirits of the sky, who watch us here!
Be ye the Houris of our Paradise
Where the great Prophet sits, presiding men,
Or beauteous spirits of the Christian's God,
In whose sweet lineaments she walks the earth,
Who chains my feelings with etherial power,
So that my spirit rides upon the wings
Of doubt, and yet devotion;—with the fear
Of forfeiting our sacred Koran's laws,
Yet almost awed into the strong belief
That her's is the pure essence which calls forth
The grace of those who rule us from
Whate'er your ministry!—I call ye
To look propitious on me;—ye t

A being, bearing with the adverse fates
Which bar him from the hopes of being blest;—
I call ye to decide, and speak by signs.—
The eye of reason in me is o'erdimin'd,
'Tis Love but speaks, but breathes, inflames, inflicts
The passion and the pang.—Say, must my soul
Renounce the faith of Islam, and its race,
To weep and worship at another shrine,
Calling Jehovah's, and not Alla's prayer?
Or constant to my country, and my creed,
Make both a sacrifice to lust and——

[*Loud thunder and vivid lightning.*

Hark!

Whose wrath is it that utters from the skies
Those sounds of terror?— [He pauses.

Ha! see Matilde comes;—

Oh, Love! what torments do thy feelings give
When thou art thus despairing.

Enter MATILDE. (It thunders as she enters.)

MATILDE.

Oh! my Lord, dost hear
The thunders of th' Almighty from his throne?
'Tis now he speaks out to those guilty ones
Regardless of his name, and punishes,
When he darts down his lightnings thus, and strikes
Some being, to give warning to us all.

MALEK.

I thought, Matilde, thine was a God of mercy,
And not of terror ?

MATILDE.

He is King of both.—
Canst thou demand this, when the desert held
No more of life for us, than the few hours
Which nature could sustain without relief ?
Who threw us in the Arab's steps ? and sav'd——

MALEK.

For what ? since I had died then by thy side,
Loving and lov'd ;—then had thy blessed vow
To be all mine, ne'er met with a recall.

MATILDE.

Do you forget, my Lord, the terms of it ?

[Raising her reliquary.]

How to your lips this holy cross was rais'd ?
Whose is the forfeit then ?

MALEK.

Oh ! do not wring
This soul to perfect misery.—Is there nought
But the stern abjuration of my faith
Which can requite thee ?

MATILDE.

Heaven forbid the deed
To serve myself alone ! for heaven receives
Our prayers and promises in love of it,
And not to purchase worldly weal, or wealth.

MALEK.

Alas ! then, tell me how ? for I am brought
Down to the very weakness of a child,
All for thy love, and question my own name.—
This arm bred up to all the feats of war,
This heart upbuoy'd in all the fire of youth,
When our life's chalice sparkles bright with hope,
And all the blossoms of the soul bloom joy,
All, all, are buried 'neath the power of Love ;
Which tramples these, yet whilst it crushes, smiles,
And even wins me, with its soft sweet wiles.

MATILDE.

I love thee, Saracen, despite of all !
Oh ! wert thou but a Christian, though no prince,
Our humbler lots had made us happier still ;
Then with the fond consent of kindred ties,
Twining the wreath of Hymen round our hearts,
We had, indeed, been happy !—but there are
Hopes, more alluring than our mortal one's,
And pleasures more imparadis'd than earth's—
Let me depart then——

MALEK. (*Vehemently.*)

That can never be.

MATILDE.

Remember, Prince, thy brother's uprais'd arm,
With bare bright scymitar, hangs o'er thy head,
Ready with vengeance fired, to doom—ah ! me,
The word dies faltering on my anguish'd lips.

MALEK. (*Impassionately.*)
Where my heart, too, would die a willing death.—
Oh, Saladin, my brother ! thou wilt spare
When thou hast heard——

MATILDE.
Stop, mortal ! 'twere in vain.
There is a destiny which separates
Our fate on earth——

MALEK.
'Tis false—what shall I swear
By Mahomet, or by thy Maker's name ?—

MATILDE.
Desist, my Lord—it is not passion's fire,
But meek humility which gains His love.—
Hush, there are steps approach.—Behold the knight,
A cross upon his shield, the Christian's sign !

Enter MONTMORENCY with his visor lowered.

MALEK.
(*Stepping forward, and half unsheathing his sword.*)
Who, and what art thou, most audacious man ?

MONTMORENCY.
A warrior, and a Christian.

MALEK.
And thus dar'st
To brave thyself amidst thy enemies ?

MONTMORENCY
Yes, on reliance of Prince Malek's honour.

He takes off his helmet off.

MALEK and MATILDE *exclaim together.*

What, Montmorency !

MONTMORENCY. (*To MATILDE.*)

Lady, 'tis the same.

MALEK. (*Haughtily.*)

I have borne witness, warrior, to thy valour,
Nor wonder at that hardihood of mind
Which prompted to expose thyself alone
To the stern hatred of surrounding foes :
Yet ere I venture to pronounce thee safe
From being made the victim of thy deed,
Tell me the object of this rash attempt ?

MONTMORENCY. (*Pointing to MATILDE.*)

Behold it there !

MALEK.

And who is it presumes
To send a messenger on such a mission ?

MONTMORENCY.

One who at least equals Prince Malek's claim.

MALEK.

'Tis false——

MATILDE. (*Stepping forward.*)

Oh, Malek, let entreaty now,
Perhaps the last, implore you to be calm.—
Brave Montmorency, let me intercede—
I would enquire of Richard, England's king,
Of Berengere, my sister, and all friends—
I pray you ease my anxious beating hopes.

MONTMORENCY.

Lady, my heart o'erflows with the full tide
Of its important words, yet I would fain,
Ere I unfold the secrets you desire,
Beseech the noble Malek to evince,
A warrior's candour to a warrior's truth.

MALEK.

You have it, Montmorency ;—do not fear
Your trust, or my betrayal.—Speak, I pray.

MONTMORENCY.

Behold, astonishment arose in all,
When to our camp England's fair Queen arrived ;
But who shall picture Metchoub's dark despair
When he discover'd the imposed deceit,
As the bark anchor'd in the hostile port ?
Frantic, and fearful of his sovereign's rage,
He took his hasty way. Soon did the tale
Reach every listening ear throughout our bands,
And all announc'd, soldiers, as well as chiefs,
That 'twas a plot Prince Malek had contriv'd,
Who, in his soul's infatuated love,
Was chained by this fair Princess to become
A friend to them, and follower of their faith.

MALEK.

And make a traitor of me ;—but proceed.

MONTMORENCY.

'Twas then the sovereigns of the league, behov'd
King Richard to make offer of these terms—
That wouldst thou turn a Christian, and ally,

This dame should be the dowry of the deed ;
 But Richard, who to Lusignan had given
 Some promise of his sister's hand, (if ere
 She yielded her monastic vow,) refused
 At first, the almost universal wish !
 Chain'd by the crafty Lusignan's desires,
 To whom Jerusalem's crown had been assign'd,
 Over his rival Conrad ;—till at length
 The general voice convinc'd his noble mind :
 'Twas then that Lusignan (who nam'd with me
 As leaders of an enterprize,) disdain'd
 To be the herald of the terms, which now
 My tongue discloses—~~if~~ disdain'd by you,
 To know what ransom you would then demand ?

MALEK.

Oh, love ! oh, friendship ! which of ye must break
 The band 'twixt happiness and me ?—Brave chief,
 Do not think less of Malek for these woes
 Which thus divide him 'gainst himself.—These, then,
 Are the sole terms to destine him ?

MONTMORENCY.

Even so ;—

Fate sums its balance with these two demands—
 Prince, wilt thou be a Christian, and a friend ?
 Lady, wilt thou be free ?

MALEK.

What would ye think
 If I should turn a foe to Saladin,
 Traitor to country, apostate to creed ?

Oh ! Matilde, thy decision is my fate ;—
 Wouldst thou be free ? I will not utter “ Nay ;”
 But if our plighted faith still warms thy heart
 With stronger feelings than to say “ Farewell,”
 Speak, let thy sentence shorten my suspense.

MATILDE.

Oh ! Malek, thy refusal to renounce
 Thy faith hath pass'd the sentence, and not me.
 Thine, thine, alas ! are not the only pangs ;
 But we must part, and Carmel's sacred fane
 Receive me into its sanctuary of prayer,
 There to plead for thee at the Eternal's shrine.

MALEK.

Then farewell hope and happiness for me.

MONTMORENCY.

Say, Madam, can this land of infidels
 Possess such charms as to admit one doubt ?

[MALEK and MATILDE stand in silence. A noise
 is heard without of shouting.]

Enter KALED.

(*He throws himself before MALEK, whilst MONTMO-
 RENCY puts on his helmet, and lowers the visor.
 MATILDE seats herself.*)

MALEK.

Ah, Kaled !—Wherefore, Kaled, art thou come,
 A friend or foe ?

KALED.

Kaled, my prince, bears nought

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 But Richard, who to Lusignan had given
 Some promise of his sister's hand, (if ere
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 A friend or foe ?

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Kaled, my prince, bears nought

MALEK. (*Taking MONTMORENCY by the hand.*)

Thou hast heard it all,
Brave Montmorency—to thy honour'd trust
I place all, all earth yields me to delight.
My happiness stands not above my honour,
And this hath broken many a heart than mine.
Think not a Saracen hath then no soul,
But when thou hearest so—remember me;
Art thou prepar'd?

MONTMORENCY.

Kind, generous Prince, I am.
That trust is sacred to me, as 'twere Heaven;
'Tis true war makes us foes in glory's field,
But in all other paths I am thy friend.

MALEK.

Kaled, my trusted Kaled, thou must haste
And, with a chosen escort, guide this knight
To where his band is secreted;—be true
Active, and vigilant, for thou wilt have
A richer treasure in thy trust than all
The gorgeous east with gold and gem could buy,
Could beauty, worth, and virtue, be so valued.

KALED.

Doubt not thy servant's services and faith.

MALEK.

Oh, heart! thy trial is at hand at last.

MONTMORENCY.

Now, Lady, I await your will?

MALEK. (*Taking MATILDE by the hand.*)

Matilde!

Matilde! ah, say what name is there so fond
But fails to speak my love.—Yet ere we part
Swear that not all thy brother's urgent pleas,
Power, or persuasion—nor that prelate's prayer,
Will force thee to accept another's vows,
Or to relinquish me?

MATILDE.

Malek, I swear,
Yes, by the glorious sun which spreads its pure
Ethereal light, constant through every clime,
So shall my Faith live on—my lord! my love!

[*They embrace.*]

MALEK.

Oh, words of happy sound, o'erwhelm'd with woe!
If I still stay, Matilde, my soul is lost.

Farewell—once more, farewell. [MALEK *rushes off.*]

MATILDE.

Oh, heaven support me.

[*Exeunt all.*—MONTMORENCY *leading* MATILDE.]

OFFICER.

So he first said, but upon further words
Was silent to our questions.

MALEK.

Bring him in—

[*Exit* OFFICER.]

'Tis strange,—'twere surely not himself disguis'd
To whom reports borne in such various shapes
Have made him come to verify my steps?
But he approaches.

Enter METCHOUB *disguised*, and OFFICER.

He salutes MALEK, *who waives to the* OFFICER *to retire.*

METCHOUB, (*disclosing himself.*)

Dost thou not know me, Prince.

MALEK.

By Alla,—it is Metchoub!

METCHOUB.

What, swearest thou

Still, by the name of Alla, and our creed?

MALEK.

Why dost thou ask it?

METCHOUB.

To be well assur'd,

Since all believe thou hast turned Nazarene,
And with strong cause.

MALEK.

Curse on thy insolence
Thou base-born slave, I'll teach thy tongue to prate.

[MALEK *draws his sword, whilst METCHOUB
takes out the SULTAN'S signet, and holds it
towards MALEK as he advances.*

METCHOUB.

Behold this signet,—strike, rash Malek,—strike.

[MALEK *stops on seeing it.*

Disdain thy Sultan's power, 'tis the last deed
To aggravate indignity towards him.

MALEK.

Slave, 'tis thy treachery hath led thee here.
That passport of authority came not
By honest means.

METCHOUB.

Does Malek talk of treason?

MALEK

And why not I?

METCHOUB (*sneeringly.*)

Oh! nothing, noble prince,
'Twas the word *treason*, only, made me doubt—
Mankind so seldom speak of that which must
Lead to their condemnation.

MALEK.

Hear me, slave ;

'Tis not, the feeling, what I should inflict
But what I owe to my own station, which
Bids me refrain ; since whether by assent

SCENE II.

*A Garden in the Palace.**Enter MALEK, alone.*

'Tis past, 'tis doom'd, ye powers of earth and heav'n!
Oh! thou all glorious, glittering orb of light
Why shinest thou so beautifully?—lo,
The earth with all its verdure and its flowers
Smiles out with the sweet incense of perfume,
And the blythe birds, in melody sing forth
The notes of joyful instinct,—Man, alas
Born 'neath the adverse stars, seems doom'd to care;
And reason's self though it persuades to right,
Cannot avert from sorrow. Is it then,
A destiny which leads our souls, nor leaves
The power within us to arrest the fates,
And thus attach'd by some supernal hand
Our virtues and our vices are, to us,
But the stern will of prophecy, which marks
The path of good or evil, whilst the praise
Of glory is the merit of the gods?
Or, must the harvest of our actions, be
The fruit of our own deeds, such as the laws
Of Nazareth's high Prophet preach'd to men?
Lo! on one side, with sorrow on his brow,

MALEK.

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Our virtues and our vices are, to us,
But the stern will of prophecy, which marks
The path of good or evil, whilst the praise
Of glory is the merit of the gods?
Or, must the harvest of our actions, be
The fruit of our own deeds, such as the laws
Of Nazareth's high Prophet preach'd to men?
Lo! on one side, with sorrow on his brow,

Stands Saladin, the Koran in his hand,
 Pointing unto the tablets of our race
 Held by true honour's guardians, faith and friendship—
 But on the other, in the attitude
 Of angel or of houri, lifting up
 Her eyes in tearful tenderness of prayer,
 Kneels, Matilde's heavenly form, beseeching hope !
 Spirit of the Invisible, descend
 For I am, love, faith, friendship, all in turn,
 Devotion, doubt, distraction, and despair.

Enter OFFICER.

OFFICER.

My lord, shall I admit the herald now,
 Whose patience becomes restive at delay ?

MALEK.

Let the impatient slave then tarry more ;
 By Alla, he shall wait my will.—Dost know
 His person ?

OFFICER.

No, my lord.

MALEK.

His name ?

OFFICER.

Alike

Unknown as his appearance, and his lips
 Refuse to give reply to our requests.

MALEK.

Didst thou not say, he bore the Sultan's signet ?

OFFICER.

So he first said, but upon further words
Was silent to our questions.

MALEK.

Bring him in—

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'Tis not, the feeling, what I should inflict
But what I owe to my own station, which
Bids me refrain ; since whether by assent

Or else by stealth, thou art possessed of that
 Same signet of command—I still am bound
 To honour it, though not the hand, which now
 Bears it in bastard right.

METCHOUB.

By Alla, then
 Thou dost deny our Sultan's sovereignty?

MALEK.

Not his—but thine;—what is the purport foul
 Thou holdest this, the warrant of?

METCHOUB.

To lead
 Thy person, prisoner, without delay—
 And by this token of what I advance,
 Our holy Prophet witness to my oath,
 My hands are now install'd to that effect.

MALEK.

By Mahomet, I swear then, take thy way;
 Or I will teach thee how the audacious wretch
 Should meet with his deserts—What I, thy prince,
 Fetter'd and made thy captive?

METCHOUB.

Didst thou not
 Deceive us all, when England's queen escap'd
 And not the princess by the falsest means?
 Hast thou not spurn'd great Saladin's commands,
 Revil'd thy countrymen—forsworn thy faith
 And art become the dalliance of a girl
 To whine, and waste thy birthright?

MALEK.

What? ho, guards;

Enter OFFICER and GUARDS.

Bear this insulting traitor off, yet first
Deprive him of that signet.

METCHOUB.

They shall first
Deprive me of the life, which holds itself
Cheap in contending for its safety.

[METCHOUB *draws, and stands in defence—the*
GUARDS *hesitate.*

MALEK.

Strike

Slaves, do ye think ye see King Richard there?

[MALEK *rushes on and overpowers* METCHOUB—
the GUARDS then seize him and take the signet
from him.

Now bear him to the dungeon, where the loss
Of liberty, may reason to respect.

METCHOUB.

Malek, I have one word before we part.
Time hath its fetters to repay thee, this ;—
All hearts, all hands, will rise against this deed ;
Great Saladin contemn'd, his power suborn'd,
The holy Koran spurn'd, our laws despis'd,
In this assault on me ;—then, trembling, think
Of the dark curse which frowns upon thy soul.
Tremble, I say ;—before to-morrow's light

SCENE II.

*A Garden in the Palace.**Enter MALEK, alone:*

'Tis past, 'tis doom'd, ye powers of earth and heav'n!
Oh! thou all glorious, glittering orb of light
Why shinest thou so beautifully?—lo,
The earth with all its verdure and its flowers
Smiles out with the sweet incense of perfume,
And the blythe birds, in melody sing forth
The notes of joyful instinct,—Man, alas
Born 'neath the adverse stars, seems doom'd to care;
And reason's self though it persuades to right,
Cannot avert from sorrow. Is it then,
A destiny which leads our souls, nor leaves
The power within us to arrest the fates,
And thus attach'd by some supernal hand
Our virtues and our vices are, to us,
But the stern will of prophecy, which marks
The path of good or evil, whilst the praise
Of glory is the merit of the gods?
Or, must the harvest of our actions, be
The fruit of our own deeds, such as the laws
Of Nazareth's high Prophet preach'd to men?
Lo! on one side, with sorrow on his brow,

RICHARD.

And what was his report ?

GLOUCESTER.

He said, the Sultan much incens'd against
His brother Malek, had march'd on his hosts
With firm determination to revenge
The cause of Islam with his brother's blood.

RICHARD.

So said the former—by the hopes of war,
Our cause should gain advantage 'midst such feuds.
The soul of Cœur de Lion ne'er aspir'd
More eagerly for contest ;—there hath been
An interval of calmness,—it is time
The tempest should arouse its angry blast—
So suits my soul to hear the battle's roar.

Enter LANCASTER.

What news bears Lancaster ?

LANCASTER.

Most gracious liege.

The army of the Sultan is at hand,
And from the top of yonder hill, is seen
(Issuing from Cæsarea's gates) the hosts
Of the renown'd Prince Malek.

RICHARD.

Goodly news,

By heavens, the revellers we left behind
Will champ their nails, in spleen, when they behold
The trophies we will earn this day ;—methinks,

OFFICER.

So he first said, but upon further words
Was silent to our questions.

MALEK.

Bring him in—

[*Exit OFFICER.*]

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To whom reports borne in such various shapes
Have made him come to verify my steps?
But he approaches.

Enter METCHOUB disguised, and OFFICER.

*He salutes MALEK, who waives to the OFFICER to
retire.*

METCHOUB, (*disclosing himself.*)

Dost thou not know me, Prince.

MALEK.

By Alla,—it is Metchoub!

METCHOUB.

What, swearest thou
Still, by the name of Alla, and our creed?

MALEK.

Why dost thou ask it?

METCHOUB.

To be well assur'd,
Since all believe thou hast turned Nazarene,
And with strong cause.

MALEK.

Curse on thy insolence
Thou base-born slave, I'll teach thy tongue to prate.

[MALEK *draws his sword, whilst METCHOUB*
takes out the SULTAN'S signet, and holds it
towards MALEK as he advances.

METCHOUB.

Behold this signet,—strike, rash Malek,—strike.

[MALEK *stops on seeing it.*

Disdain thy Sultan's power, 'tis the last deed
To aggravate indignity towards him.

MALEK.

Slave, 'tis thy treachery hath led thee here.
That passport of authority came not
By honest means.

METCHOUB.

Does Malek talk of treason?

MALEK

And why not I?

METCHOUB (*sneeringly.*)

Oh! nothing, noble prince,
'Twas the word *treason*, only, made me doubt—
Mankind so seldom speak of that which must
Lead to their condemnation.

MALEK.

Hear me, slave ;
'Tis not, the feeling, what I should inflict
But what I owe to my own station, which
Bids me refrain ; since whether by assent

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But the stern will of prophecy, which marks
The path of good or evil, whilst the praise
Of glory is the merit of the gods ?
Or, must the harvest of our actions, be
The fruit of our own deeds, such as the laws
Of Nazareth's high Prophet preach'd to men ?
Lo ! on one side, with sorrow on his brow,

SALADIN.

Then unmask,
And let me judge thy countenance,—thy crest
Denotes thee, Saracen ; (*AGNES takes her helmet off.*)

I know thy look,—
Surely thou art that Agnes, who was once
Prince Malek's——

AGNES. (*Interrupting him.*)

Oh, my Sultan, do not name
The recollection of what I have been.—
It is enough to feel what I am now:—
But I have words of import for your ear,
Outweighing all things.

SALADIN.

Thou, perchance, canst give
Some word of Metchoub, and of Malek too ?

AGNES.

Embitter'd at the thought of Malek's love
For England's Princess, I became the spy
Of every action.—It is known to you,
How Montmorency, in Cesarea's walls,
Held audience with Prince Malek——

SALADIN.

Dar'st thou say
He hath turn'd traitor ?

AGNES.

Sultan, be thou judge
When I have told thee all things.—'Twas the hour
When Kaled came, entrusted with thy words ;—

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The fruit of our own deeds, such as the laws
Of Nazareth's high Prophet preach'd to men ?
Lo ! on one side, with sorrow on his brow,

Of one, who carries an ill-omen'd tale.

AGNES.

Let recompense be measured as I speak.—

Great Saladin, your servant, Metchoub, now

Lies fetter'd by the orders of the Prince;

The power you vested, by your signet, spurn'd !

Your name, your race, cause, country, all revil'd !

And your true subject, missioned by you, chain'd !

SALADIN.

By Mahomet, my brain is all on fire,

Though doubt still chokes the gaspings of belief.

Say, is it malice leads thee to this act ?—

'Twere better to have been the vilest thing

That crawls, than feel my ire, if thou art false !

AGNES. (*Mournfully.*)

I speak in tears and truth.

SALADIN.

Lost—lost, indeed !

Oh ! I could shed salt tears, like woman, too,

Over this erring brother.

(*A voice is heard without, saying, "Where's the Sultan?"*)

Enter METCHOUB, covered with dust.

SALADIN.

Ah ! where indeed ?—for I am lost in woe,

And dare not even question thee through fear—

Thy look foretells such things.—

OFFICER.

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MALEK.

Bring him in—

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METCHOUB.

Must Metchoub rouse, then, Saladin's great soul,
Which droops so suddenly ?

SALADIN.

It is not fear,
By Alla, which o'ersways me—but distrust.
(*A cry of "Alla" is heard.*)

METCHOUB.

Hark ! hark ! I hear their on-cry—haste this way.

SALADIN.

Metchoub, I follow, yet I fear the day.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter RICHARD.

RICHARD.

By heavens, the host of Saladin was lost,
And victory soar'd a moment o'er my helm,
When Malek put his valour in the scale,
And turn'd my tide of triumph.—Yet, even now,
Doubt rides the air, and Fame hath not yet soar'd
To crown the victor.—For the fight once more.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Christians driven by the Saracens, and Exeunt.

Enter RICHARD and MALEK, fighting. MALEK
retreating before RICHARD—*Exeunt, and re-enter.*
RICHARD retiring before MALEK with his sword

*broken—*RICHARD *at length pauses, and* MALEK *stands over him with his sword uplifted.*

RICHARD.

Strike ! strike !—the lion yields not but in death,
Richard of England bids thee !

MALEK.

Ha !—'tis he—

My heart suspected it, and dared to pause
For one devoted thought.

RICHARD.

Yet strike, I say—

There is one man alone could do this deed ;
Or dare oppose my prowess. Who art thou,
Who will not visit vengeance on his foe ?

MALEK.

Malek—thy sister's fond idolater !

RICHARD.

And my eternal foe ;—for thou hast pluck'd
The laurels of this day from off my brow.
I bid thee strike !

MALEK.

No, valiant monarch, rise.

It was thy sword, and not thy prowess, failed.
Oh, for the love which Matilde here inspires,
Accept thy life.

RICHARD.

What ! to owe gratitude

Unto a Saracen ?

[At this moment the shouts of "Alla! Alla!" are heard from MALEK'S forces.]

MALEK.

Our hosts advance—

Hark! hark!—another pause 'twill be too late.

Let not thy pride be dearer than thy life,

Because I proffer it.—

(Another nearer shout of "Alla!" is heard.)

Behold, that steed

Near yonder tree.—Now, now, they come—fly fast ;

Too soon my power of succour will be past.

[Exit RICHARD.]

Oh, Matilde! in the fury of the fight

My soul did not forget thee ; nor desire

Of war one circumstance more prized than this,

To prove my heart's devotedness to thee.

Enter SALADIN, and the forces of MALEK, who exclaim, as they throng round him, "Malek, for ever!—Malek, and victory!"

MALEK.

Thus far, my fellow soldiers, have your hearts

Followed your chieftain—then obey him now.

Before the Prophet bend the willing knee,

And to your Sultan render your allegiance :

Our hearts are his—his will is ours.

[MALEK and his forces fall before SALADIN, and exclaim

We swear!

SALADIN.

Arise, oh, Malek, thus I pardon thee.

[SALADIN and MALEK embrace.

MALEK.

Oh, Saladin, my heart is doubly thine ;—
First, as the brother of thy blood—and then
Having deserv'd thy wrath, thou deign'st to spare.

SALADIN.

My soul forgives thee all things,—for I felt
A hope, oh, Malek, when report the most
Decried thee false ;—now hast thou all repaid.
Since, but for thee, King Richard had been victor.

MALEK.

Honour's a duty, and deserves no praise.
The breast that but a generous deed performs,
Through the desire of some vain-glorious boast !
Has not good-will, but vanity at heart,—
For pride alone then prompts to the pursuit.
The noble Saladin attaches not
Such thoughts to Malek's actions ?

SALADIN.

No, my brother !

My heart receives thee with its warmest throb,
So may it never feel distrust again.—

(*A groan is heard.*

What sound was that ?—behold some warrior lies
Gasping for life !—bear him this way.

(*The Soldiers lead AGNES forward, and take off
her helmet.*

MALEK.

Alas!

Fated, ill fortun'd Agnes, is it thou?

AGNES.

Dost thou not read distraction in my eye?

Alas! my soul hastes to its punishment.

I die at peace with all things but myself.

That faith, oh! Malek, which in love I took,

Here I renounce!—'tis I alone have wrought

The pangs I feel.—Heaven be thou merciful,

My sins require it all—spare, spare—Oh, God!

(She dies.)

MALEK.

Alas, poor Agnes!—Bear the corse away,

So that interment, suited to her rank,

And in the faith she died, be minister'd.

[Exeunt Soldiers with the body.]

Enter KALED.

KALED.

Sultan, the foe repulsed at every point,

Hath left us masters of the field.

SALADIN.

Bid then

The tribes move onwards, that our hearts may reap

The harvest of our hands, in this regain

Of territory from the Christian's sway.

[Exit KALED.

MALEK.

What means does noble Saladin design,
For following up these triumphs?

SALADIN.

I have one,
My noble, valourous brother, one, to which
My heart beats with the harmony of joy,
Devising method to repay thy courage,
And make amendment for Suspicion's fault
In doubting thy strict honour ;—for which thought
My mind a herald purposes to send
To Richard King of England, and explain
My heart's resolve to crown thee Syria's king !
Whose seat shall be Jerusalem, and demand
His sister in espousal, as thy wife ;
Where both religions shall be held in grace—
And Saracen, or Christian, have alike,
Temples of worship, tolerance of faith.

MALEK.

Oh, brother !—for that title suits me more
In loving duty, than a thousand names
Fashion'd through art or flattery, by men's lips .
'Twere beyond my desert, though not desire,
To have my happiness so fram'd by thee.
Grant thou mayest find me worthy of the trust,
That being gifted thus, I keep thy love.

SALADIN.

I want no better proof than what has past.—
To our pavilion now, to counsel this ;

For I had rather see the olive twin'd
Around the temples of a kingly head,
Than all the laurels gather'd by the sword,
Which War's wild arm reap'd from the ensanguin'd plain,
Rear'd with the blood of myriads of slain.

[*Exeunt*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*Scene lies in the Camp of the Crusaders, near
Ascalon.*

Enter MATILDE followed by LUSIGNAN.

LUSIGNAN.

Does England's princess scorn my courtesy ?

MATILDE.

Be brief I pray you.

LUSIGNAN.

Rather say, speak on—

All hearts around both love and homage thee,
But most thy servant's acceptance pleads.

MATILDE.

My Lord, I have no time to squander thus ;
The import of your words, you said, was great ;
If nought but this, I pray you spare my patience.

LUSIGNAN.

The air of Egypt, Madam, hath done this

But should my lips be failing in such sounds
Which make the voice seem music to the ear,
Tell me, in sooth, how can I learn to speak?
Since thy long sojourn with the Saracen
Hath made our tones harsh discord.

MATILDE.

'Tis not so,—

But that I scorn to listen to the jay,
Striving to imitate the linnet's song.

LUSIGNAN.

Canst thou not school me then in tender sounds?
For I should prove Love's true interpreter
Under so fair a teacher.

MATILDE.

What, my Lord?

Who ever heard the raven more than croak,
Though perch'd for ever where the nightingale
Tuned its melodious song.—But let me go,
For whilst my noble brother's in the field,
Methinks 'twould better suit each vaunter's pride
To marshal soldiers, and not talk of love.

LUSIGNAN.

Madam, you would rebuke me—I implor'd
The King to let me follow in his train;
His answer was—his presence would suffice,
Although Prince Malek should oppose his power.
For, by the Cross, I swear, my heart beats quick
To meet that Saracen, and chastise——

MATILDE.

Whom?

Say—that the lesser stars shall rule the sun,
Ocean resist the empress of the tides,
And Earth stand stubborn in its annual course;
Thou might'st as well;—or rave of striding o'er
The cloud-capt Caucasus.

LUSIGNAN.

Is this your strain?

Who now shall dare to judge appearances,
When treason lurks within a woman's breast,
And a Plantagenet?

MATILDE.

I would array

My thoughts in judgment opposite to thine,
Nor fear the verdict who would win the day,
Though vaunting Lusignan should be competitor.

LUSIGNAN. (*A trumpet sounds.*)

The trumpet speaks—'tis Richard who returns,
With triumph on his brow, and on his sword
The blood of Saracens.—Behold he comes.

Enter King RICHARD, BERENGERE, and Attendants.

LUSIGNAN.

Hail! gracious King! the heavens o'erwrought with
smiles,
Glow at your triumphs

RICHARD.

Would'st mock me chief?

LUSIGNAN.

How?—speak!—my greetings were as I would wish,
Full of bright hopes; who could expect the less
From Cœur de Lion?

RICHARD.

Heavens! I'm not myself
Know, Lusignan, that Richard's head returns
Stript of its wreath of glory, which the brow
Of Malek bears resplendent.

LUSIGNAN.

Tell me how?

Thy friend is here, to soothe and to avenge.

RICHARD.

Then let him draw his sword, and swear with me.
Behold, the hosts of Saladin had fled
Before our warriors, led by this same hand;
Who hearing that Prince Malek had rebelled
Against his brother, fancied sure success,
Seeing dissensions stirring 'midst their bands,
Now met near Cesarea;—when, at once,
Fierce as the lightning from its gather'd shroud,
And furious as the whirlwind, Malek came,
And unexpectedly upon our path
Obtruded further triumphs from our hands,
And in his turn defeated our success.
But, by Plantagenet, I lay my hopes
On future enterprize. Now must thou swear
Thy sword shall not be sheath'd, till the bare point
Of either weapon stream with Malek's blood.

MATILDE.

Ah, me!

(Shrieks and falls into the arms of Berengere.)

RICHARD.

What puling noise offends my ear?

BERENGERE.

Pardon, my Lord—it was thy sister's voice,
O'ertaken by some sudden swoon.

RICHARD. *(To MATILDE.)*

Madam,

Thy heart dishonours Richard's royal line,
Since the bare name of blood has such effect.
But, know, it is my purpose to reward
The valour of whoever does the deed,
With the requital of thy hand.

MATILDE.

Hear me,

My king and brother!

RICHARD.

'Tis no time to weep —

When thou canst face me with a smile, not tear,
I will attend thee. Berengere, lead out
The lady to her chamber.

[Exit BERENGERE leading out MATILDE]

Lusignan,

My spirit burns to think of this defeat.

LUSIGNAN.

Think no more of it.—

RICHARD.

So would Richard say,
Did he not hold his life of Malek!

LUSIGNAN.

How?

RICHARD.

Within the struggle of the fight, it chanc'd
That our embattling forms met front to front;
When after many stern encountering blows—
(Curse on the steel which flinch'd, not Richard's heart,)
My sword was snapp'd in twain, and he became
Victorious;—

LUSIGNAN.

And spared your life?

RICHARD.

'Twas then

My fated, furious anger bade him strike;
Which he disdain'd, but urged me swift to fly:
My soul would have disdain'd the proffer'd gift,
But for the cause for which our hearts contend,
Which makes us all the bondsmen to its service.

LUSIGNAN.

Think no more on't—the name of Richard brings
Too many valiant deeds on memory's page
Recorded there immortally, to deem
One petty loss could tarnish glory's mirror.

RICHARD.

Aye, but ambition, wheresoe'er it tends,
Would, like the eagle, nearer eye the sun!

And dart indignant through the passing cloud,
Awhile obscuring its refulgent light.

LUSIGNAN.

Here is more news.

Enter LANCASTER.

LANCASTER.

The Sultan Saladin,
These letters, by a herald, sends your Grace,
And waits your will.

RICHARD. (*Receiving them.*)

What action's on the wing?

What levelling of purposes, and words
Of bold pretension does he now conceive?

(*He opens and reads.*)

"There is one God, and Mahomet's his prophet.—

The Sultan Saladin to England's King,

The valiant Richard, this, with greetings sends.

Grieved at the devastation which stern war

Is the fierce agent of ;—at towns laid waste,

By fire and force—and smiling harvests reaped

Not by the sickle, but the scatheful sword:—

His wishes are to curb the demon War,

Who leads on Animosity, to spill

The blood of thousands, and consult for peace.—

With this, to sweeten these most bitter feuds,

And make conciliation suited to

The palates of pretension, and of pride—

Great Saladin propounds these friendly terms:—

That being bent to set on Malek's head
 The crown of Palestine—in holy vows
 Of marriage, asks King Richard's sister's hand,
 To be betroth'd as Malek's honour'd spouse,
 Jointly to reign o'er Salem, and its sons;
 Where their Messiah's, and his Prophet's creed,
 Alike shall hold their ministry, and peace
 Cemented by such union, shed a light
 Of tranquil splendour over all, and guide
 The pilgrim unmolested to his shrine."

(RICHARD *meditating*.)

LUSIGNAN.

Does Cœur-de Lion pause in his reply?

RICHARD.

What say you, Lusignan?

LUSIGNAN—

Does there exist

One doubt how England's sovereign should decide?
 The noble blood of the Plantagenets
 To mingle with their vile, infected race,
 More base than brutes—a wandering Arab horde,
 Who learnt to war by herding amongst wolves,
 And match'd 'gainst whom the dog is nobler far?

RICHARD.

I have no doubt;—but there are other minds
 Who have a right to argue on these terms;—
 The council must be told of these demands—
 Yet doubt not, even there, of Richard's will
 To serve his friend in arms.

LUSIGNAN.

Alas! what hope

Has Lusignan, should Richard's mind attend
To these base offers?—Think how it will bar
Revenge from action!—and to end in what?
To see our honours wane into a torch
To light the Hymen of an Infidel,
Who, as he crowns his nuptials at the shrine,
(Indignant thought) will inwardly deride,
And say, "Poor shallow fools, I pity them."
By heavens! I'd rather be condemned to gnaw
My flesh by piece meal, than behold the day
When Barbarism shall usurp the fane
Of triumph, and then dart derision down
On those its readier wit hath left below.

RICHARD.

Does Lusignan suspect his friend of this?
Then may the gate of glory close, indeed,
And Infamy throw wide its loathsome den
Where we may grovel with the toad or worm,
Ourselves the vilest reptile.

LUSIGNAN.

Nobly said.—

Have not your eyes seen Ptolemais fall,
And Acre vanquish'd?—why not Salem too?
Then—if the friend of Richard dare aspire
To be allied to him;—but 'twere too much
Almost to charge anticipation with.

RICHARD:

Not so—you have my promise, Lusignan,
If fortune will assist aspiring hope.—
But as the council yet must be inform'd,
Let us away. [*Exeunt RICHARD and LANCASTER.*

LUSIGNAN. (*Alone.*)

Hold! hold! I must not slip

This anchor of my hopes, o'er which the buoy
Of expectation rides.—For now the wind
Blows in my teeth, and keeps me bound awhile,
Which Fortune and my skill must overcome;—
For Richard is my anchor—and that maid,
The haven, which displays its fairy form,
Whereon enchantment smiles. This fiery heart
Like to the Euxine which admits no ebb,
But flows unceasingly. Shine out, ye stars,
Whose horoscope attended at my birth,
To mark my destiny, whilst I go on
Obsequious only where I serve myself;—
For so must interest counsel—gaining those
We stand in awe of by a crafty smile;—
Knee-crook'd—professing all things, as a slave
Only to suit the hidden end we crave. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

*Scene lies in a Pavillion, in the Camp of the
Crusaders.*

Enter BERENGERE and MATILDE.

MATILDE.

Think you it was the moment of his wrath
Alone, which made him utter such a threat?

BERENGERE.

Oh, yes, my sister, Richard is not cruel;—
'Tis his ambition, and that fiery glow
Of valour, which at times o'ersteps all bounds,
And makes him seem the tyrant.

MATILDE.

Oh, ye powers,
May it be so.—I fear not Malek's life
When open warfare leads him in the field;
But men use other means to rid their fears
Of a more mighty rival.

BERENGERE.

Does your heart
Suspect then Richard of such base attempts?

MATILDE.

Oh, no—but mark the crafty Lusignan;—

For, at the thought, his wolfish eye struck fire.
I would not be the object of his hate,
Or I should say my prayers, and cry "Amen."

BERENGERE.

Believe me, it is love works up these fears.—
I have been summon'd by my loving lord ;—
A herald has arrived from Saladin.

MATILDE.

Oh, hasten ! and let Matilde's poor heart learn
Its import ;— for anticipation, (like
A bark, all ready with its unbent sails,
Riding upon the sunny waves of hope,)
So buoys upon my feelings.

BERENGERE.

I'll be gone.

{ *Exit.*

MATILDE. (*Alone.*)

I have presaged some happy news to day,—
For in my dream of yesternight, methought
That I was suing Malek with the hope
Of his conversion ;—when a cloud appeared,
From which (but for the golden fringe of light
That tipt its fleecy edge,) my soul would have
Foreboded ill ;—but suddenly it opened,
With a concussion of most awful sound,
And from the womb of it an angel came,
Who, smiling, took my Malek by the hand,
And led him to the eternal throne of grace,
Which the now opening veil of heaven display'd.

Enter female ATTENDANT.

MATILDE.

How now? thou art out of breath.

ATTENDANT.

Yes, my lady,

There is a Saracen, who bids me say,
He bears some token from Prince Malek, which
His orders are to render to your hands.

MATILDE.

Lead him this way—but have a cautious eye,
And quicker step, that no one see him enter.

ATTENDANT.

Fear not, a woman has the readier wit,
In cunning's schemes, and in concealing it. [Exit.

MATILDE.

Faint heart, why dost thou beat with such strange
throbs,

That Fear might call thee sister, and not Hope.
Now do I feel my spirits all distuned,
Like a neglected harp, when every chord
If sounded, would produce unpleasing tones
So plays Hope, Fear and Doubt on Nature's frame.

*Enter Attendant, followed by MALEK habited as a
Saracen soldier.—The Attendant retires.*

MATILDE.

I feel as though I could not question him—

Yet must I speak.—What tidings dost thou bring
From the Prince Malek ?

MALEK.

(Taking off his turban, and kneeling at her feet.)

This—at Matilde's feet.

MATILDE.

(Rushing towards him, and taking him by the arm.)

My lord ! my love ! ah, wherefore hast thou dared
To venture, where at the echo of thy name,
A thousand swords would raise their envious points
To pierce that bosom, dear to me alone !

MALEK.

Thinkst thou I could have borne delay so long,
Which shut the door of joy 'twixt thee and me ?
He is but half a lover, who dares nought
To see the idol of his love.

MATILDE.

Ah ! me !

How camest thou hither ? for my heart knows not
Whether the fear of danger for thy life,
Chokes not the utterance of my love, so much
It palsies joy.—

MALEK.

Fear not, since I fear nothing.

MATILDE.

Thou art a man—born to a sterner nature,
Bred up 'midst toils and dangers, and innur'd
By trials, and long custom, to be fearless ;
But I am woman, fram'd in tender thoughts,

Who, where they love, though they will undergo
Even more than men to prove affection's strength,
Fear most, feel most, even when they wildly rush
Opposing terror, for the hearts they love !

MALEK.

Say, my heart's love—for by that blessed name
My soul invokes thy image with its sighs,—
Knowest thou the purport of our mission here ?

MATILDE.

Oh, I know nothing, save that thou art here.—
But wherefore this ?—'Tis the more common garb
Which clads the low-born soldier.

MALEK.

Even so ;—

My brother, Saladin, (whose generous mind
Outstrips fair Fortune's when she showers most gifts,)
Hath framed a plan on which our love may build
The fabric work of happiness,—the which
Now comes in terms of embassy to Richard ;—
That I, being seated on Jerusalem's throne,
Should have thee as the consort of my crown,
And an alliance of perpetual peace
Sworn 'twixt the sovereigns who now arm the land.
Thus counsels Saladin—whilst I alive
To every purpose in which thou art part,
Disguised as now, join'd the small chosen band
Who came with Metchoub to propose the truce.

MATILDE.

Thy faith, oh, Malek, is in yonder heaven,

Where nightly I pour orisons for thee.—
Oh, strange illusion, that in Richard's mind,
Where valour dwelt, vengeance should so conspire,
That I would not, for worlds, he saw thee here ;
Though gratitude's a debt which if unpaid
Stamps baseness and dishonour on the soul.

MALEK.

Say, dost thou think he will reject the terms ?

MATILDE.

Alas! 'twere seeking sorrow ere it comes,
(Which ever comes too soon) to pre-ordain
The sentence of our fate by bitter thoughts ;
Yet doth it seem Adversity hath set
Its star above our footsteps.

MALEK.

Oh, Matilde!

That were to say, a brother's word's beyond
A lover's happiness, who lays his vows
In honour, faith, and fervour, at thy feet.
But let it be, that Richard's heart denies—
Will Matilde deem it duty to comply,
And scatter all love's promise to the winds ?

MATILDE.

Oh, no !—oh, no !—next to my love to heaven,
Thy image is enshrin'd in this poor heart.—
Say that thou art a Christian, and will bow
At the same altar, and adore our God,
Then shall no hand, no heart, no hope, but thine,
Be Matilde's blessing.—

MALEK.

Yet, should I say "Nay,"
Then wilt thou force my image from thy soul,
And hide me in oblivion?

MATILDE.

Wilt thou wring
The last poor drop misfortune has to grant?
Oh, Malek! know, suspicion breeds a pang
Deeper than *that* adversity inflicts.

MALEK.

Forgive the thought—'twas love that caused it all.—
But where is he—that worthy pastor—he
Whose voice hath such persuasion in its power?—
Will he not guide the council?—and his word
Won to our favour, plead with such effect
That even Richard's arguments will yield
When he approves.—

MATILDE.

Still, Malek, all conspires
Against our hopes—William of Tyre hath long
Been absent from the camp, and though each day
Dawns with the hope of seeing his return,
Night follows on, and closes in the scene,
Sombre and silent as its own dark shade.

MALEK.

Oh, Fortune! to thy will our hearts must bend,
Since all is vain, when thou wilt not befriend.—

Enter ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Madam, 'tis known a Saracen is here,
And the stern chieftain, Lusignan, demands,
Impatiently, the cause of such occurrence.

MATILDE.

My lord, my love, how wilt thou 'scape his hands?

MALEK.

Fear nothing—who shall know me, thus disguised?

MATILDE.

You know not Lusignan.—Malice in him
As natural is, as poison to the adder.—
Say, thou wilt keep thy temper within bound—
Say, that no provocation will arouse
The sparks of passion;—speak, my lord, my love,
'Tis Matilde asks.

MALEK.

All thou desirest, love,
Malek will do: but we must say Farewell,—
For danger seems to rise.—Alas! farewell. (*Embracing.*
Oh, woeful sound!—Stern destiny, that parts
The tender chord which still should bind our hearts.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Council Chamber in the camp near Ascalon.

Enter the LEGATE *of the Pope and Cardinals,*
RICHARD, LUSIGNAN, CONRAD, LANCASTER, &c.

LEGATE.

Most puissant Richard, England's noble king,
Summoned to council at thy honour'd call,
To give impartial judgment in this cause,
We ask thy heart's appeal upon these terms.

RICHARD.

Grave prelates, arm'd in strong Religion's mail,
Which shields your natures from corruption's shafts
That wound the wanton souls of worldly men—
To you, apostles of the word of heaven,
I lay my charge ;—since some in whom the weight
Of other matter suiting more their hopes
Prompts to accept conditions without pause ;—
Some in whom envy, cholerick to see
Honours awarded on deserving heads ;—
Others from fear, who in Discretion's cloak
Would hide their tremors by appearing wise ;—
And many Folly still allures to seize

The mask of novelty, in any shape :—
These are the minds which would abide such terms,
And honour Saladin more than themselves ;—
But it behoves that we should raise the force
Of pithy language, to decry such thoughts,
And in their nakedness expose the bare,
Deform'd, base frame, of all self-suited plans.

CONRAD.

Say who hath shewn a stubborn spirit yet?
I marvel if your highness can accuse
Any more justly than your partisans.

RICHARD.

I come not here, Conrad of Tyre, to add
Contention to contention ;—my demand
Is with these holy men—there let it rest

LEGATE.

We are inform'd by these same tablets, sent
From Saladin the sultan, what he asks.—
Where is the lady whom it names ?—'tis fit
She should be question'd 'ere we can decide.

RICHARD.

I crave your pardon, what should that avail,
Since she is taught to have a brother's will
For her sole guidance?

LEGATE.

That were right, indeed,
In all the minor notices of life,—
But here we have a cause of public weal,—
As such our duty leads us to enquire

And ask the lady's presence.

RICHARD.

Lusignan,

Inform the Queen of this.

[*Exit* LUSIGNAN.]

LEGATE.

In what should this

Suffer the King of England to seem wroth,
Since 'tis the holy cause which brought him here,
For which all sacrifice were but a grain
Against the scale in which its glory lies,—
Which raises its importance up so high,
As to make other objects past observance.

RICHARD.

I have obey'd—it therefore nothing boots
To offer further colloquy.—Here comes
The Princess.—You have every power to act.

Enter MATILDE *followed by* LUSIGNAN. *The Council*
rise.

LEGATE.

This is the lady call'd for?

RICHARD.

You are right.—

Matilde come forth—for thou art summon'd here
To set the seal of duty or disgrace
Not on thyself alone, but upon all
The kin, to whom thou art allied by blood;—
So shall my lasting enmity fall down,
If thy choice prove not worthy of that birth.

MATILDE.

My king, and brother—let it not be thought
That I outstep the natural reserve
Of modesty, which should adorn my sex,
When I stand firmly, and advance my words,
Such as faith, virtue, and fair truth direct ;—
But to these holy fathers, here convened
As to thyself, and chiefs, and nobles round,
I have to offer an unstudied tale,
Such as pure candour only could conceive,
And innocence utter.—Oh, my lord,
You see one not ambitious of the crown,
Which girds the head of royalty—nor power
To be the judge of a too erring world ;
For female lips are ever prone to spare,
Even where justice should demand its debt.
But to deny that love hath lit its torch,
And holds a place within my maiden heart,
Since duty bids me speak with Candour's voice,
I pause not to reveal my plighted faith,
Although my heart forebodes the vow were vain.

RICHARD.

What dost thou own, unblushingly to all,
That a vile Saracen could have the power
Thus to enslave thee—one whose soul disclaims
The name of Jesus—and would trample down
The pale of Christianity, to raise
The mummeries of Mahomet ?

MATILDE.

Alas !

None are all perfect—Nature has its bonds
Which Reason's self might vainly strive to break.
Virtue's the same, whether midst Polar snows,
Where the rude Scandinavian rears his shed,
Or in parch'd Egypt's plains—the Arab's haunt ;
It should be cherish'd for itself alone ;—
Nor should we shun its deeds because the prayer
It proffer'd heaven in offering up its praise,
Accorded not in ministry with ours.—
Oh, we may mourn at the decree of fate,
Which hath not shed a universal light
Of what the Saviour of mankind reveal'd,—
Nor let soft tear-eyed Charity become
The martyr to our faith, but send forth Hope
To seek the olive branch, and fondly trust
Its rays of glory may yet shine on all.

RICHARD.

Fatal illusion that can charm the soul,
Even to defend the enemies of Christ ;—
If so, an amulet would suit thee more
Than mocking heaven in usage of the Cross.

MATILDE.

Oh, Thou that rulest o'er the hearts of all—
To Thee I lift my voice, since Earth denies
To judge impartially.—Know, I reject
The thought of union with the heart I love,
Unless its adoration be pour'd forth

At the same altar where I offer prayer.—
But if it be the sin, which some denounce,
To honour all the attributes which breathe
Mercy, and magnanimity, and truth ;
To cherish gratitude, and deeply feel
Esteem—nay more—towards those who have deserv'd
Its warmest throb !—then is my guilt confirm'd.
I honour Malek—shall I say I love ?
Oh, were his faith such as my own declares,
My feelings would exult in what must now
Be buried in oblivion, and the grave.

LEGATE.

My lords, a duty of the highest stamp,
Involves our judgments in this weighty task,
Whereby each man who puts opinion forth,
Must shew the actuation which impell'd
And earn a claim to wear the cap of justice.

LUSIGNAN.

Most holy father, it may seem misjudg'd,
To mar your presence with a word of wrath,—
But 'tis injustice, which the most impels
The heart of man to play the tempest's part.—
Who part with what they rightfully possess,
And spiritless give up, and turn to moan ?
Does not the lion rave for its lost young ?
The cygnet for its nestling ?—Does not man
Cling to his heritage, and home, and heirs ?
And shall not I, when power would so conduce
To question if my kingdom shall be made

The barter of your fears ?—'Twere true, the smile
Of Fortune glows not now upon my path ;
And war hath set another on the throne,
Which to deny were mine, would sacrifice
Justice and truth to rank oppression's grasp.

CONRAD.

Who talks of kingdom—that hath not more right
To vaunt of an estate than the small spot
Which will afford a solitary grave ?
I have but slightly scann'd these articles—
But it appears a wanton act of wrong,
To pause in answer on such liberal terms.

LUSIGNAN.

And who is he that hath more claim than I,
To be the orator in such a cause ?
And start up an opinion to decide
In judgment on what touches me most deep ?
Or where the bold declaimer that will find
Matter for argument in its support ?—
For Lusignan's the foe of him who stands
As champion of a controversy ;—now
I cry out " shame " upon the contumely
Of him, who speaks, where Richard disagrees.

CONRAD.

Wherefore this mockery then of idle words,
Since he is term'd an enemy who acts
By his own conscience ?—Is it not so, lords,
When loud reproach would silence reason's voice,
And play the swaggerer ?—

LUSIGNAN.

Whilst treason acts
The smiling hypocrite—whose hopes denote
The speculations of false Conrad's heart.

CONRAD.

What, what, is this the burthen of thy hate?
Oh, Honour! come, and set the blur of vice
On the world's brazen cheek, that Confidence
May know who's honest—since its stage is throng'd
With nought but maskers, counterfeiting worth!

LUSIGNAN.

And who bade sullen Conrad interfere?
By heavens! my words shall tell thee stubborn truths,
And prove the friend of Richard.—

CONRAD.

And for why?
Go, ask of Avarice why it hordes its wealth;
Of wild Ambition, why it draws its sword!

LUSIGNAN.

And of false Conrad, why imposes he
The look of candour?—

CONRAD.

Not to undeceive
His mock-made majesty of Palestine;—
For I will clamour this contempt of him
Whilst I have breath——

LUSIGNAN.

And braggarts are at large.—

LEGATE.

What means this rhapsody of ill phrased words,
Like a discordant grating of harsh sounds?
Wrath kindled minds but seldom tread along
The paths of wisdom.—Chiefs, repent ye of
The hasty words your tempers have pluck'd forth,
So say we all, and bear like noble minds,
The face impartiality demands.
I hold true justice ever as the type
Of mortal man's pretensions unto praise.—
Time may impair the limb, but it should aid
The judgment;—Does King Richard stand disposed
That we should give opinion in the cause?

RICHARD.

Lord Cardinal, as champions of the church
Men, in whose breasts Religion hath its shrine—
I cannot deem a strong confidence vain;—
Yet be it, that Plantagenet's high line
May not be sullied by a link of blood
To Moslem royalty;—It is the love
We feel towards Heaven, which should control our vows;
Shall we then cancel ours by joining hands
In amity with our heretic foes?
And will the heavens conclude us then more just
By leaguings with the scoffers of that creed
Which it sent forth its martyr'd Son to raise?—

[*Enter an Attendant who goes to MATILDE and whispers something to her.*—RICHARD, looks sternly.

RICHARD. (*continuing.*)

To let Contagion, as the vulture, prey
Upon the fallen body of our cause,
And tear the vital part, which must lie bare
To the rude insults of a jarring world?
Now, by Plantagenet, I stand amaz'd,
And would apply the baser name of "dog,"
To him who would exchange his vows, for vows
Differing in hues, extreme as heaven and hell.

MATILDE.

Good father Cardinal, a messenger
Hath brought the tidings of the near approach
Of Tyre's Archbishop.—Oh! 'twas Heaven that sent
An angel to forewarn him to return,
Since his good counsel comes at such an hour!

RICHARD.

What motive now o'ertops thy girlish brain?—
Think'st thou Tyre's prelate thus will countenance
The sum of all thy follies, and advise
An act inglorious to us?

MATILDE.

Oh! my brother,

I will not rouse thy temper in attempt
To turn belief from what it will uphold,
But rather bear the thought of doing ill.
Oh! some are born to sit on Fortune's lap,
Whilst some are born to suffer;—'tis the charter
Which Nature hath bequeath'd to all her sons;
Tho' Heaven to balance its divine decree,

Hath given us virtue, as the precious balm,
Amidst all toil and trouble, to repose
In blessed hope, if we but keep her paths.—

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF TYRE.

LEGATE.

Most reverend father, hail!—May peace preside
Over our councils.

TYRE.

High deputed judges,
Anointed of the Church—I greet ye all;—
And to thee, monarch, mighty midst the sons
Of chivalry, I bow in loyal faith;—
A solemn service finds you here conven'd.

RICHARD.

No other, holy sire, than war or peace—
Duty, or else disgrace.—But lest I may
Offend this sacred synod, in demand
Of thy skill'd judgment, I now ask their leave
To hear the voice of one so wisely fraught.

LEGATE.

'Tis granted, royal chief—none are so wise
But they may profit;—At the present hour
Our hearts impatiently attend the truth.

TYRE.

The truth, most holy and most noble chiefs,
Surrounds us as the splendour of yon sun,
And is but darken'd to the wilful blind;—
Breathes on us as the genial air of spring,

And is but poison'd in Perversion's den ;—
 Sounds on the ear harmonious as the lyre,
 Save where wild Discord drowns its silvery tones ;
 Oh ! that I stood on Sion's sacred mount,
 Beholding Salem, and its solemn shrines,
 Then would my voice, (indignant at the thought
 Of bartering away the cause which led
 Monarchs and heroes, warriors and saints,
 To arm this holy land,) arise, and cry
 " Woe to the fallen city !—Woe to those
 Who have forsaken Sion, and their Lord !
 Let Israel, and its fate, be in their thoughts.—
 Woe, woe, the trump hath blown, who shall not fear ?"

MATILDE. (*Falling at his feet.*)

Father !——

TYRE.

My child, arise—my blessing on thee.—

MATILDE.

Oh, father, I appeal to thee, who knowest
 How to blend mercy with the acts of faith ;—
 Let not distrust frown on me now, because
 My soul hath been assail'd by mortal love.—
 How beautiful yon sun illumines the heaven,
 And yet, behold, that little cloud, which comes
 To shade its glory ;—See, already hath
 It veil'd it partly from our sight :—Thus oft
 Our mortal nature shades the immortal light
 Of our warm souls, nor will my lips deny
 Mine partly was eclips'd by Malek's love.—

Say, it was woman's weakness—form'd to be
 The source of love—the soul of sympathy ;
 Would Malek become Christian—it were vain
 To hide the importunities of love
 Towards one, whom I esteem in all, save faith ;—
 But that, I fear, is fixed—and as yon cloud
 Which, lo, hath pass'd, and left the sun to glow,
 I shake the weaker feeling from my heart,
 And bow, oh, father, to thy will, and heaven !

TYRE.

“ Oh, captive daughter of Jerusalem ! rise ;—
 “ For beautiful upon the mountains are
 “ The feet of those, who bear glad tidings round.
 “ Blow, blow, the trump in Zion, and proclaim
 “ A gathering of the people ;—from their chambers
 “ Let bride and bridegroom go—and let the priests
 “ Before the solemn shrines of Judah, stand
 “ And weep, and call upon Jehovah's name :—
 “ Prepare for war—draw all the mighty near—
 “ Ploughshares to swords, and pruning hooks to spears
 “ Beat quick, and let the vallies hear the sounds,
 “ For, lo, the heavens and the earth shall shake,
 “ And from Jerusalem shall the Lord proclaim
 “ Pardon, and peace to Zion evermore.” *

RICHARD.

Thou man of holy writ, and pious heart,
 I stand the foremost to approve thy words,
 Therefore to arms, as champion of our church.

* Isaiah ch. l. Joel ch. i. and ii.

LEGATE,

Prelate, thy words are just, as they are righteous :
But say,—would this Prince Malek change his faith;
And by the amnesty from furious war
Save the effusion of unnumber'd lives
Which Earth must yet be stain'd with, e're we gain
The shrine of our affections ?—Think ye, chiefs,
These terms may be advanc'd,—nor yet desert
Our duty and the oath we've sworn to heaven ?

LUSIGNAN.

How can your duty Cardinal, be just,
When I am dealt unjustly with ?—The crown
Of Palestine I claim,—and cannot be
So dispossess'd of,—but the act must lie
Dishonourable on your hearts.

LEGATE.

Rash knight

Be careful how your tongue outruns your sense,
Our duty lies above the petty scorn
Of every claimant, who would be a king.

TYRE.

Most holy legate,—let me not be call'd
Presumptuous in the office of my tongue.—
We all owe justice to each other's acts ;—
'Twas I, who was the umpire of this crown,
And such as justice urg'd most fair,—approv'd.—
The mark'd assent of most, proclaim'd it just,—
But placing mercy now within the scale,—
To save the many,—one man's loss of power

Is a small sacrifice contrasted there ;—
The heavens are merciful,—and love not, blood
As incense in return for all its gifts.—
Alas,—how stands it then ?—I know the Prince
On whom fair nature hath shower'd qualities
To grace its noblest work,—Christendom
Would find a valiant champion in the change ;
But can we hope he will forswear all ties
And dare propose rejection of his creed
And alienation from his brother's blood ?
Be it so done ;—offer the insult then ;—
And mark how Saladin will hurl the terms
In fierce defiance back upon your hearts.—
But it behoves us to regain that shrine ;—
This is the paramount to every cause,—
So shall my judgment still uphold, with all
The strength, Religion kindles in my soul.

RICHARD.

War,—war, I shout,—who cries for peace, offends
The ear of heaven, which listens to our words.

LUSIGNAN.

My voice re-echoes Richards warlike sounds
And be our cry “ Jerusalem or death.”

CONRAD.

Let no man speak more ;—lo,—Derision sits
Mocking the hollow pomp of counsel here ;
And ceremonious duty cloaks the form
Of haughty humour,—which will, still break forth
Galling the breast which strives to check within

Its hasty gibes ;—the antic monarch smiles,
Quick-eyed Derision,—with whom I am leagued,
Who sets a rampant lion 'fore your eyes,
To rouse your valour, which might else wax tame ;—
And so, farewell ;—I leave ye valiant men,
To draw your swords, and rant at shadows now,
Then prove as forward when war asks the blow.
(*Exit. Conrad.*)

RICHARD.

Go, ranting fool, and stamp, and swear, and sneer ;—
Words, without deeds,—like thee, betoken fear.

LEGATE.

We can but counsel, you can combat too ;—
And yet deputed by a power vice-gerent
Earth's spiritual lord,—as far remov'd
Above your power, as you above your peers,
Did he accord not, royal chief,—we would
(Deputed by his high authority,)
Shower anathemas on your will perverse,
If you persisted, in what he has power
To be dictator of,—approve, annul,
Or anathematize ;—but be it now
As you desire, since I can so aver
Opinions coinciding with your own ;—
Fathers, our duty calls us hence away ;—
I pray dissensions stir not in your hearts ;
Be true unto yourselves, and it shall come
In whate'er chance,—Honour must grace your cause.
(*Exeunt, LEGATE OF THE POPE, and CARDINALS.*)

RICHARD.

Now let me breathe, for my impatience like
A vessel tossing on the waves, against
An adverse wind, so fretted on my brain
Wrought by this tardy judgment ;— Valiants, now
The wind sits fair,—let all the sails be spread
Which enterprize can crowd,—yonder's the field
Of Ascalon,—'twas Ascalon beheld
The sword of David, gleam victorious
Over the house of Saul,—so let it be
With us, o'er Saladin's and Malek's hosts

LUSIGNAN.

You have a second in your bold attempts
Most noble Richard,—who will follow you
As lightening on the storm ;—what would your grace ?

RICHARD.

Let all our hosts be number'd at this hour ;—
Let's strike a blow e'er they have time to say
They do suspect us of some enterprize ;—
The tribes of Saladin are near at hand ;—
Delays clog up the spirit of the soul
As ashes dull the fire ;—And to my heart
I like the ocean, when the waves rise up
Their foaming crests,—and shake their spray i'the wind,
And spirit-calling elements at strife
Remind the soul of the stern battle's din,
As they uplift their voices, and display
The stern magnificence of awful might
And rouse man's every energy to action.—

Now Lusignan and Lancaster,—prepare
 To launch defiance at these Saracens.—
 Father, I leave that lady to your charge
 Let her deceive not heaven, as she has me.

[*Exeunt*, RICHARD, LUSIGNAN, LANCASTER, *and*
 ATTENDANTS.]

TYRE.

Approach, my child, for in thy alter'd mien
 Pale melancholy reigns,—the settled star
 Of thy lone looks.

MATILDE.

Oh, Father, in my soul
 Despair and grief have fill'd up every spot,
 Where happiness and innocence once dwelt ;—
 And tho' I oft condemn my feeble heart.
 Even in the act, I turn and cherish still
 The thought, which nature 'spite of reason's will,
 Hath twin'd so tenderly, that whilst my soul
 Reproves, my heart weeps for the thing it shuns
 And calls on pity's voice to pardon me.—

TYRE.

Hadst thou but shut thy heart at first against
 The whisperings of that power, which comes with
 The blandishments, and flatteries, with which
 Fair Hope and Pleasure tinge the rosy hours :—
 Alas, my daughter had the hope of heaven
 Been foremost in thy thoughts and dispossess'd
 Love, of the sole stern empire of thy heart :—
 As happy as the lark which mounts the air

And sings his morning carol to the skies,
Even so,—thy feelings would have soar'd above
And paid its adorations to the heavens ;
But love with leaden wings hath warp'd thy flight
And kept it bound to this dark world below.

MATILDE.

Alas, we are but mortals,—prone to err,
And even with our best intentions,—sinful ;—
Yet, if my soul hath forfeited heaven's love,
Tell me, by what sure path I may regain it ;—
For I am weary of this world of care
Where sorrow only seems to be my lot.—

TYRE.

Stop,—stop,—for in the utterance of thy words,
There is impenitence ;—our lives are all
Our maker's,—who will call us at some hour,
And not to bear with resignation,—is
To shew, impatience at his laws divine,—
Who plac'd us here to prove our love to Him,—
And not to be the worldlings of this sphere.

(A trumpet sounds repeatedly.)

MATILDE.

Oh, hark the musterings, for the hosts around ;
Now will stern war shew his embattled front,
And shake his blood-red tresses ;—Love shall have
No tie,—but slaughter's hands shall wrench apart ;—
Imagination shudders at the thought ;—
And thou, oh Malek,—be a mangled corpse
Ere Christianity can call thee, son ;—
Whilst I—

TYRE.

My daughter, hush, such painful words ;
This is no place of refuge or of prayer !
Where yonder turrets crown that wooded hill
We will repair, and wait the shock of war,
Offering our prayers for Richard and his cause.

MATILDE.

Oh, Father, tho' my soul supports itself
And looks to Richard,—hoping for his triumphs,
Will it be impious to mingle there
One hope of safety for another heart,
Allowing mercy to supplant the thought
Of total slaughter, even towards our foes?—

TYRE.

Oh, mercy is the type of God, himself,
Else, hapless would it be for erring man ;—
And mercy in us,—proves the soul allied
To the immortal spirit of the heavens
When, we on earth would imitate his ways,
Humbling our aspirations at his throne.—
Let us depart, my child,—where we can lift
Our praises to his name.—

MATILDE.

Thou art my guide,
Consoling me,—when all beside desert me.—

TYRE.

My child, this way.—

MATILDE.

Father, I follow thee.—

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV.

The Pavilion of SALADIN, on the Plain at Ascalon.

Enter SALADIN and MALEK.

SALADIN. (*Holding out a letter.*)

These are the insults which they must expect
Who would conciliate with presumptuous pride.

MALEK

The terms were thine, my brother,—for altho'
I could not but approve,—Hope scarcely dar'd
To play the flatterer with my willing heart.

SALADIN.

Hope dares do all things, with some minds ;—to me
'Tis but the rainbow 'midst the storm,—to mock
The heart with its bright hues,—like Happiness—
Th' ideal joy of a woe-stricken world.—
But let War raise his scymitar, and shout
His anger to the clouds, he shall find one
At least not shaken by his threatening ire.

MALEK.

Oh, more than one, if Saladin does not

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MALEK.

Yes, more than one, if Saladin does not

Distrust the heart of Malek ;—do not wrong
 My honour, tho' my feelings may be wrung
 At the rejection of the offered terms :—
 Say, that my feeble heart was caught within
 Love's silken net, and play'd the madman's part !—
 Say, that my soul transported to the clouds,
 Wander'd within a labyrinth of light
 Dazzled,—confounded by the glittering beams
 Which led it on bewilder'd thro' their maze :—
 But do not add, my heart's regard for thee.—

SALADIN.

Peace, Brother, say no more,—I do not hold
 The mirror up to nature's darker deeds,
 Much more suspect thee to be false to me.—
 Dost thou not often bring to memory's eye
 The days, when youth and freedom saw us nurs'd
 Within our mountain's fastnesses,—amidst
 Our pastoral race,—and Ayub, our brave sire
 Taught us the rudiments and art of war !—
 Not even there did emulation raise
 One thought unkind against affection's smile ;—
 But most to me,—bright recollection binds
 One fond, fraternal thought of gratitude.—
 On Alexandria's wall, (whose stout defence
 First placed our names amongst the sons of fame)
 When battling 'midst a host of spears,—one arm
 Was rais'd to carry death in its stern blow,—
 Thy valour rush'd and sav'd my sinking form
 Which one pause more had number'd in the dust.—

Oh think'st thou, I shall e'er forget the debt
Which bankrupts all,—so poor a thing are thanks
To offer in return.

MALEK.

Yet, not thy thanks
Can be more warm, than is my love for thee.—
To what, alas,—do pride and pomp but lead
Our restless natures, Saladin?—'Twas thus,
Contentment like the sunshine of our clime
Bless'd every day with its all-glowing beams,
And if one petty sorrow crept within.
Our youthful bosoms,—'twas to give more scope
For the succeeding joy to revel there,
And lighten Hope with a more beauteous smile ;—
But launch'd upon the wide scene of this world
Where the fierce passions riot in all shapes,
We are their sport, like to the storm, becomes
The unmoor'd vessel, which is hurried on
Where'er the billows and the whirlwind drives.

Enter KALED.

KALED.

Sultan,—our spies (but now return'd) report
Strange things,—no less than that the Christian's hosts
Led by King Richard move apace this way,
Under the shade of yonder forest paths,—
And that their van must now be nigh at hand.

SALADIN.

The sooner the more welcome, since our tribes
Pant for the field,—haste, let the signal sound
And say,—the Sultan,—will be at their head.

(*Exeunt* KALED.)

How red, and bloody looks the sun to day
As if it did presage, the angry will
Of our great Prophet,—let us offer then
To Alla, and his name, our fervent prayers
That no dark cloud may dim the Crescent's rays ;
And if our souls already number'd are,
Amidst the Faithful, who, this day are doom'd
To meet the joys of Paradise ?—Oh Malek
This is the last kind greeting which our lips
Can hail with mutual thoughts.

MALEK.

Perchance e'en so,—
For I have had of late most awful dreams,—
Visions of some o'erhanging destiny ;—
Yet ending mostly not in woe, but joy.—
Sometimes, of precipices high,—to which
(Lost in the misty vapours of the Earth)
My steps were hurried,—when a flood of light
Whilst, on the verge of tottering to the deep,
Burst from the skies and sav'd my sinking frame.
Sometimes, of shipwreck dreadful, where the bark
Borne by the tempest as a cloud along
Th' immensity of space, thus rode the waves

When lo, a voice like thunder rent the air
And wave and wind became, on sudden, calm.
Sometimes of pestilential gloomy dews
Where for some sin or suffering I was cast
When, a fair form even like Matilde's form
Came and conducted from the loathsome caves.

SALADIN.

Ha! was it so? And thy soul still is bound
As fervently to Mahomet?

MALEK.

My sword

Shall speak, for all things,—lo, the summons rings,
From out the brazen trumpets mouth,—'tis time
We should obey its signal:—

SALADIN.

Yet, once more,

Ere we set up that idol,—mighty War,
Whichman shouts woe to,—yet which man relumes
With the fierce brand, snatch'd from the baleful fires
Ignited first by Passion's reckless hand.—
Oh, yet one word more, brother,—for 'tis not
Unmanly to put forth those fairer buds
Of spirit,—which nature hath grafted in
Our mortal breasts,—whence blooms a perfum'd flower
(Not like the poison'd plant,—whose odour's death;
And which war holds within his purple hands)
But, such as fills the air with fragrant balm,
Such as affection,—charity and faith
Distill from out the tendrils of the heart.—

MALEK.

Even, as the fair sun mellows summer fruit
My feelings ripen with such tender words,—
Or, as a tree from which the oozing gum
Drops fast, distill'd there in its season time
So doth my eyes, bring forth the falling tear
Moistening my cheek,—oh, Saladin, for thee.

SALADIN.

(They embrace.)

Malek, farewell,—'tis over now,—let's haste
I hear the busy stir without.—Farewell.

(Exeunt SALADIN.)

MALEK.

It had a sound like the prophetic knell
Of parting life ;—yes, Saladin,—farewell.—
He's gone,—and if to meet again ?—the power
Which rules us, only can reply in truth.—
What power ?—And why did he evince a thought
Distrustful of me ?—It is said, men's looks
When Conscience sits uneasy on their hearts
Betray the soul's apostacy or crime.—
Was it, that thus,—I seem'd ?—a hateful sight,
And must suspect myself,—and have to quell
A rising pang of undecided faith ?
Oh, burst thou heart—region of jarring throbs,
Unsettled hopes, and visionary dreams :—
Break,—break, ye chords of feeling in my breast,
Since I, no more can tune kind nature's strings
To harmony and concord.—Frightful war

With blood-shot eye,—and writhing neck and hand
 Distorted brow, and swollen cheek,—I hail
 Thee and thy horrors,—for, from thee, I seek
 An answer to all doubts,—an end to Love,
 Annulling cares below, for hopes above.—

(Exeunt.)

SCENE V.

Camp of the Crusaders, on the Plains of Ascalon.

*Enter KING RICHARD, LUSIGNAN, LANCASTER, and
 Standard Bearer to Lusignan, &c.*

RICHARD.

Let all our lives,—my friends,—our strength and skill
 Be summon'd in attempt of glowing deeds
 To crown our brows with triumph.—Here, once more
 Valiants, we meet, to hold the mirror up,
 Which must reflect the glories on ourselves
 Which we shall be the actors in ;—to raise
 To war, an altar,—where the incense bright
 Shall be the blood of foes ;—oh, he who lives
 To hail his comrade, thro' this day's deserts
 May mingle with the proudest one of Earth,—
 For I have neither fear, nor faltering hope
 To cloud within my mind those day-dreams bright

Which raise a glorious fancy on my soul.—
Here, and hereafter, shall we give, Fame scope
(If we prove victors,) to sound out her trump,
And lack at length, notes to extol our praise.
King of Jerusalem,—To thee, I give,
The charge of the left wing,—God-speed,—thy skill
May need no flatterer, for historian ;—
Whilst I will to the right ; where I shall find
All hearts I trust like mine,—how my blood mounts
At the bare mention of such glorious thoughts.
For Lancaster,—'tis then, when War stirs up
The Spirit's fire,—and reason's energy,
That nature shews the character of man :—
And mortals,—there assume, like Mars himself
The port,—appearance of the warlike God,
And cope as heroes for immortal praise.—

LANCASTER.

Hath it been told, your highness, that our scouts
But now return'd, bring tidings of our foes,
Who, wary as the tiger in its lair
Stand now at arms, expecting an assault ?

RICHARD.

The greater then our triumph, should we crown
Our toils with Victory's chaplet ;—Lusignan
Haste to thy charge,—whilst I will to the right ;
Thou hast my counsel,—keep thy memory true,
And at the signal,—close upon their lines.

LUSIGNAN.

Doubt not of my firm will to foil the foe ;—

The elements of water and of fire,
 Ne'er hiss'd at contact with more fury,—than
 My heart with hate would make a hecatomb
 Of the whole race of Moslems.—

RICHARD.

Let it be,
 Even as thy sternest thoughts can compass,—so
 That they but meet with the same fate,—away,
 And wave our standard,—whilst I cheer the thoughts
 Of all our hands,—assembled here in arms.

(*Exeunt RICHARD and LANCASTER.*)

LUSIGNAN.

'Tis said Prince Malek's host opposes mine,—
 Should our swords meet,—(and Fate affirms the thought
 By every look,) then must stern Valour rouse
 Its fiercest mood,—and think alone of blood.—
 It little boots the eagle to arouse
 The raven's ire,—but when it meets its peer,
 'Tis then that innate spirit,—instinct,—blood,—
 Or whate'er be its name,—shows all its strength
 And fury claps her wings,—and shrieks,—and swoops
 Thro' the affrighted air, which echoes round
 The tones of terror.—Did not Richard fall
 Beneath his dexterous sword?—Yet must I strive
 To hurl this mighty rival from his throne,
 Ere I can hope, she will look kind on me.—
 Come hither, Tancred ;—

(*STANDARD BEARER, coming forward.*)

Tancred, hast thou learnt

To look on all deeds with a callous eye,
So they but serve thy master and thyself?—
Be, the deed, that of mercy or of blood?

STANDARD BEARER.

Should you ask this,—since I was by your side
When Salisbury receiv'd—

LUSIGNAN.

Ha,—hush,—that were
A deed to be forgotten,—since the thought
Rousing the conscience, like a timid deer
To start at its own shadow or the wind,
Might mar revenge of a just debt.—

STANDARD BEARER.

My lord,

'Tis a good world ;—who says 'tis not,—but damns
Himself in its opinion ;—yet methinks
Those deem'd the best,—do often shame the name
Of honour,—(which too oft is but a name ;)
So that to serve one's self, by the same means
Which those denoted best, in secret use,
Is but to keep on an equality,
Where, did we not—'twould fare us like the worm
To be down trampled ;—therefore do not fear
To lay thy darkest broodings 'fore my eyes.—

LUSIGNAN.

Give me thy hand, Tancred ;—for thou hast won
My lasting will to serve thee.—

STANDARD BEARER.

Well, my lord,

Let the hereafter prove it,—we but stand
 On promise now,—as eagles, on the flight
 For an expected prize ;—what would your hopes ?
(A trumpet sounds.)

LUSIGNAN.

Tancred, thou hear'st war's stern alarum, where,
 We shortly shall be witness to more deeds
 Of blood, than we could number ;—in my heart
 One craving swallows all its keen revenge,—
 Malek,—dost hear,—'tis he I would dispatch.
 My purport is, to seek him thro' the ranks,
 His skill surpasses mine ;—keep by my side,
 Take this ;—should Fortune favour me,—'twere well ;
(Giving a dagger.)

But, if thou see'st me, feeble in the fight,
 Thou know'st its use,—there's poison in the point ;—
 Does thy heart falter ?

STANDARD BEARER.

I have said the word,
 I'll do it,—else——

LUSIGNAN.

You would have shrunk ?

STANDARD BEARER.

No, more ;—
 Reflection must be driv'n from deeds, which man
 Dares not look on unblushingly ;—'twere true,
 The timid hunter prowls in vain for prey :—

LUSIGNAN.

Then on—my friendship shall the act repay.

(*A trumpet.*)

Hark,—'tis the signal for the charge,—away.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI.

Scene on the Plain of Ascalon.

Enter RICHARD and FORCES, &c.

RICHARD.

Command, my lord of Surrey, to advance
His squadron to this spot,

(*Exit. OFFICER.*)

See, now they come
Their wild hurrah, like wolves upon the scent,
But England's leopards, shall be with them soon ;—
Now, men at arms, 'tis Cœur de Lion calls,—
There's work enough for all our hands to day.—

Enter LANCASTER

LANCASTER.

My liege, our left seems slow to meet the foe.—

RICHARD.

'Sdeath man, thou mak'st me like the bellowing wind
At the bare thought.—Did they not hear the blast ?
Blow,—blow the trumpets,—'till the heavens, all, crack
With the loud war-notes ;—come my valiants,—on
We have stern toils, ere Victory be won.—

Exeunt.

*Another Part of the Field.**Enter SALADIN and KALED, meeting*

SALADIN.

Who's here ?—ha, Kaled,—who are they that fly ?
By Mahomet,—the battle fares but ill ;—
How moves the right, with noble Malek ?

KALED.

Sultan,

He scours around the foe, as clouds that sweep
The lofty mountain tops ;—performing deeds,
Of valour, far eclipsing aught before.—

SALADIN.

Alla, be prais'd ;—but hear.—what cry ?—what cloud
Of spears ?—ha ;—what,—distraction,—death,—despair,
The crescent, see !——

Enter forces of SALADIN, retreating, and crying
“Aumaun, Aumaun,” SALADIN *rushes to impede them.*

Who stirs one step more, dies.

Slaves, dastards, base-born, mis-begotten slaves ;
Oh, coward-dogs,—fit game for Infidels,—
Crouch to the ground, and kiss the very dust,
Which humble as it is, (and bears the tread
Of every fool or slave,)—compar'd to ye
Is worthy of the loftiest meed of praise.—
Turn here, and start anew ;—for, if your blood
Springs from the stock of Ali, or your hearts

Burn with the true fire from the Prophet's shrine,
I charge you follow Saladin, who seeks
No greater share of praise than one of you.
Now turn with me and cleanse away this stain !
God, and the Prophet,—onwards,—Alla-hu !—
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VII.

Enter LUSIGNAN and STANDARD BEARER.

LUSIGNAN.

See, see, he moves that way ; by heav'ns, with what
O'ertowering mien, and action he commands,
That Mars himself, might envy his proud gait
And prize a lesson of his gallant deeds.—
Now, now, again he spurs his war-horse on ;
And I, applaud him, tho' he is a foe.—
Tancred,—our time is now,—for, mark, his path
Lies from yon multitude of hostile spears.—
Ha, ha,—his steed hath fallen :—let us on.—
(*Exeunt.*)

Another Part of the Field.

Enter MALEK, alone.

My gallant war-horse,---noble Soliman,

That oft hath borne me, on the flying foe,
And heard the shout of Victory,—and seem'd
Conscions of all thy master's fortunes,—when
With high-arch'd crest, and snorting nostril wide,
Proud prancing gait, or pawing hoof,—thy form
Display'd the grandeur of thy noble breed :—
I part with thee, as from a long-tried friend
And thy dumb suffering in that piteous glance
Convey'd more meaning than the shriek of pain.—
Farewell my gallant steed,—in future fight
Should Malek live to hear the battle's clang,
His heart will yearn for Soliman again
To bear him onward 'midst the ranks of war.—

Enter KALED.

KALED.

Arm,—arm, my lord,—'tis Saladin who sends ;—
Oppos'd to him, King Richard leads the foe,
Who press so hard,—that if no succour's given
Fortune will strike him to the dust.

MALEK.

Away,

And say I come ;—

(Exit. KALED.)

Where is my war-horse now ?

*(Exit. MALEK, on the opposite side,—and re-
enter fighting with LUSIGNAN,—they pause.)*

MALEK.

Who art thou ?

LUSIGNAN.

I am, Lusignan, thy foe,—

By every thought which malice can invent,
By every act which Vengeance can pursue,
Thy deep, determin'd foe,—unless thou wilt
Resign thy heart's pretensions to the love
Of England's princess.—

MALEK.

Thou inflated mass
Of pride, and evil,—thy imprudent soul
Shall suffer for the insults of thy tongue.—

LUSIGNAN.

Curs'd Saracen, come on :—

*(They fight, and LUSIGNAN at length falls,
exclaiming.)*

Ha, Tancred now.

*(The STANDARD BEARER rushes on, behind
MALEK and stabs him in the back,—MALEK
turns and strikes down the STANDARD
BEARER and falls himself,—whilst LUSIG-
NAN escapes.)*

MALEK.

Oh, villain,—coward dog,—who urg'd thee on
To do this deed of murder,—not of war ?

Re-enter KALED.

Ah, Kaled ;—

KALED.

Oh, my lord,—my prince,—my friend
How does thy servant find thee ?—

MALEK.

Ask that wretch

Or his more bloody master.—

KALED. (*to STANDARD BEARER.*)

Speak thou fiend

What means this dagger?—oh, thou hellish man
Ere thy last, loathsome breath escape that mass
Of cankerous flesh with crime,—speak, murderer, speak?

STANDARD BEARER.

Go question Lusignan, I am not bound

To have thee for confessor.—

KALED.

(*Killing him.*)

Then take that,—

And have me for thy executioner.

(*He dies.*)

He's gone to answer for it,—if such fiends

Have souls ;—alas, my prince,—

MALEK.

How fares the battle?

KALED.

As two contending elements,—my prince,—

The one, rous'd by the other's fury.—

(*The trumpet here sounds and the cry of the*

SARACEN is heard.)

MALEK.

Ha,—

I hear the cry,—Kaled, they come this way,

(*Enter the SARACENS retreating.*)

Stop, soldiers stop,—what mean your coward steps ?

(The SOLDIERS exclaim.)

The battle's lost, the Sultan flies himself,—

MALEK. *(Endeavouring to raise himself.)*

But I,—I will, *(He sinks.)* oh feeble frame,—not soul—

(Again exerting himself.)

Now, lift me up,—where is my sword ?—Alas,—

(He sinks again.)

Kaled—lost,—lost ;—oh, Kaled, is there not

A height hard by,—there would my limbs be borne ;

A numbness steals throughout my frame, which warns

I have not long to live, and this last blow

Wrecks all my fortitude.—

KALED.

Do not speak thus ;

Come hither soldiers,—bear your chieftain hence.—

(The soldiers carry MALEK out. Exeunt all.)

SCENE VIII.

Scene lies near the Field of Ascalon, in front of a Monastery. The MONKS are heard within, singing the Vespers.

HYMN.

O, Beata Virgine !

Hear our Vesper hymn to thee !

Ever, for 'tis Holy Land,
 We, a lone way-faring band,
 Steep'd in sin and worn with woe
 Pray, that thou would'st grace bestow,
 Miserere! Miserere!
 O, Beata Virgine!

O, Beata Virgine!
 Here, at eve, we call on thee!
 While the yellow daylight dies,
 'Midst the weeping nightfall's sighs,
 Warrior faint—and Pilgrim weary,
 List, and join our Miserere!
 Miserere! Miserere!
 O, Beata Virgine!

*Enter MALEK, borne by the Soldiers, and followed
 by KALED,—they place him on the ground.*

MALEK.

'Tis done,—I would its sounds had been prolong'd
 To calm the spirit in me which expires.—
 Kaled,—raise up my head ;—the gorgeous sun
 Sinks fast beneath the hills ;—the lovely hills
 Upon whose bosom its light dies ;—my sight,
 Fades too,—ah would it were on Matilde's breast,
 Where Love might lisp its last and lingering sighs ;—

Farewell,—thou beauteous star,—the morrow, soon
Shall see thee rise with a new flood of light ;
But where my soul ? Kaled,—thy hand,—I sink.—

KALED.

Oh no,—oh no,—here will I ring for help.—
Some ministering hand, will check the flowing wound.

(A MONK appears.)

Father, a bleeding warrior, claims your aid

MONK.

Christian or Saracen ?

*(The Arch-bishop of TYRE comes forward, followed
by MATILDE.)*

TYRE.

What matters whom

Thou churlish man,—if he need Pity's aid ?

(TYRE goes up to MALEK.)

Great God of Mercy,—it is——

MATILDE. *(rushing forward.)*

Who is it ?

Oh, Malek,—

(She shrieks and falls at his feet almost senseless.)

TYRE.

Oh, my son !

MALEK.

Father,—Matilde,—

(KALED *raises* MATILDE, *who springs forward and grasps* MALEK *by the hand, and hangs over him.*

MALEK.

'Tis she—she comes to soothe my dying hours,
'Tis she,—'tis Matilde,—must I leave thee, love ?—
(*Looking tenderly at her, who remains weeping.*)

TYRE.

Oh, Malek, let the lovely eye of Faith
Charm your last glance, even Matilde pleads for it,—
Heaven will reward you with eternal joys.

MALEK (*with emotion.*)

With HER ?

TYRE.

With her, with all.—

(*He sprinkles the water on MALEK, which an Attendant has brought, who also carries a Cross.*).

Receive Heaven's grace,—

Receive, my son the light of a new world.—

(MALEK *is here exhausted, and becomes speechless, he points to the Cross, which is held to him by*
TYRE, *who takes MATILDE'S hand and places it in MALEK'S, saying,*)

Take her, who was denied thee upon earth,—
And an eternal joy be yours hereafter.—

(MALEK *in raising MATILDE'S hand to his lips, dies*)

MATILDE. (*Looking at the corpse.*)

My husband!—ha, ha, ha, ha!—

(*She falls on the corpse hysterically.*)

FINIS.



EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY W. T. MONCRIEFF.



THE curtain fall'n, our Tragedy is o'er,
And Matilde comes to bid you weep no more ;
To woo your smiles, for 'tis the bliss of woe,
When woman dries the tears she caus'd to flow.
Methinks I hear exclaim, some cynic rogue,
" What wants Melpomene with Epilogue ?"
'Tis Nature's Law—Woe cannot ever last,
Contrast is Nature's Life—the Tempest past,
The blissful Calm succeeds—the gloomy Night
Still yields its place to Day and cheering Light—
Winter gives way to Spring—Hope follows Fear—
And Heaven, itself, waits on our sojourn *here* !
For this the Drama's Bards from earliest years,
When Tragedy hath claim'd our sighs and tears,
Have sent Thalia to the soul's relief,
In shape of Epilogue, and charm'd our grief.
Sweet is the joy that on our sorrow waits,
More sweet the woe the gifted Bard creates !
Pity hath feelings rapturous as Love,
And Sympathy is felt by Saints above ;
Else why have Poets chosen tales of fear,
But for the joy of grief, the rapturous tear ?

For oh ! the tear, from mimic grief that flows,
 O'er Beauty's cheek, like dewdrops on the rose,
 Does but refresh its bloom—with diamond light,
 The heavenly eye that sheds it, beams more bright,
 And darts more sunny glances when 'tis past ;
 As skies shine brighter having been o'ercast !
 For this the Muse has sought your hearts to move,
 With a dark tale of Pity, War, and Love.
 If I my Love too feebly have exprest,
 Who feel it, least, perhaps can paint it best,
 And mine was felt, in every heart-breath'd sigh,
 In every faltering word and faint reply ;
 Oh ! let me still your sympathy discover,
 I gain'd a convert, but I lost a lover,
 Perchance, too much, I yielded to a creed,
 But Malek's Love and mine, was Love indeed ;
 Proving this Truth—a moral, from above,
 That Love when pure, is FAITH, and FAITH is LOVE !
 Should home-bred beaux, our scenes of warfare scorn,
 Let them be told they're by a Soldier drawn
 Our Bard's not one who ne'er bore sword or shield,
 Who never "set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle knows
 More than a Spinster," he is none of those.
 Like Chæroneæ's seer, he brav'd the fight,
 And, like Cervantes, bled in Honor's right.
 Then if less polish'd than more courtly Bards,
 Ah, let me claim for him your kind regards,
 Spurn not his honest speech, but do him right,
 Nor judge a Soldier like a Carpet Knight.



